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THE GROCER'S SHOP ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

BY JOHN OXENFORD.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY FOSTER.

THERE are two several shops for comestibles, which, on two several occasions, make a remarkably fine figure in the depth of a London winter. One is the Grocer's Shop on Christmas Eve, the other is the Confectioner's Shop towards the festival of the Epiphany. However, it is the first only which produces the real national excitement. The spectators of Twelfth-Night luxuries have, for the most part, every reason to believe that their participation will be confined to the sense of sight. Fine combinations of saccharine splendour for the eyes; Kings and Queens, ill-formed but gorgeously gilt and frosted for the eyes; pippin-paste involved into curious scrolls—all for the eyes. But the interest of the Grocer's Shop on Christmas Eve penetrates far more deeply into the soul of the surveying crowd. Many, many of them, far beyond the limits of twelfth-cake consumers, hope to share practically in the boiled luxury. While the twelfth-cake is more an aristocratic type, the plum-pudding is a national symbol. It does not represent a class or a caste, but the bulk of the English nation. There is not a man, woman, or child raised above what the French would call *prolétaires*, that does not expect to taste a plum-pudding of some sort or other on Christmas Day.

A certain superstition, current among the people, shows how deep-rooted is the reverence for plum-pudding. "As many plum-puddings as you eat about Christmas-time," says the superstition (and why

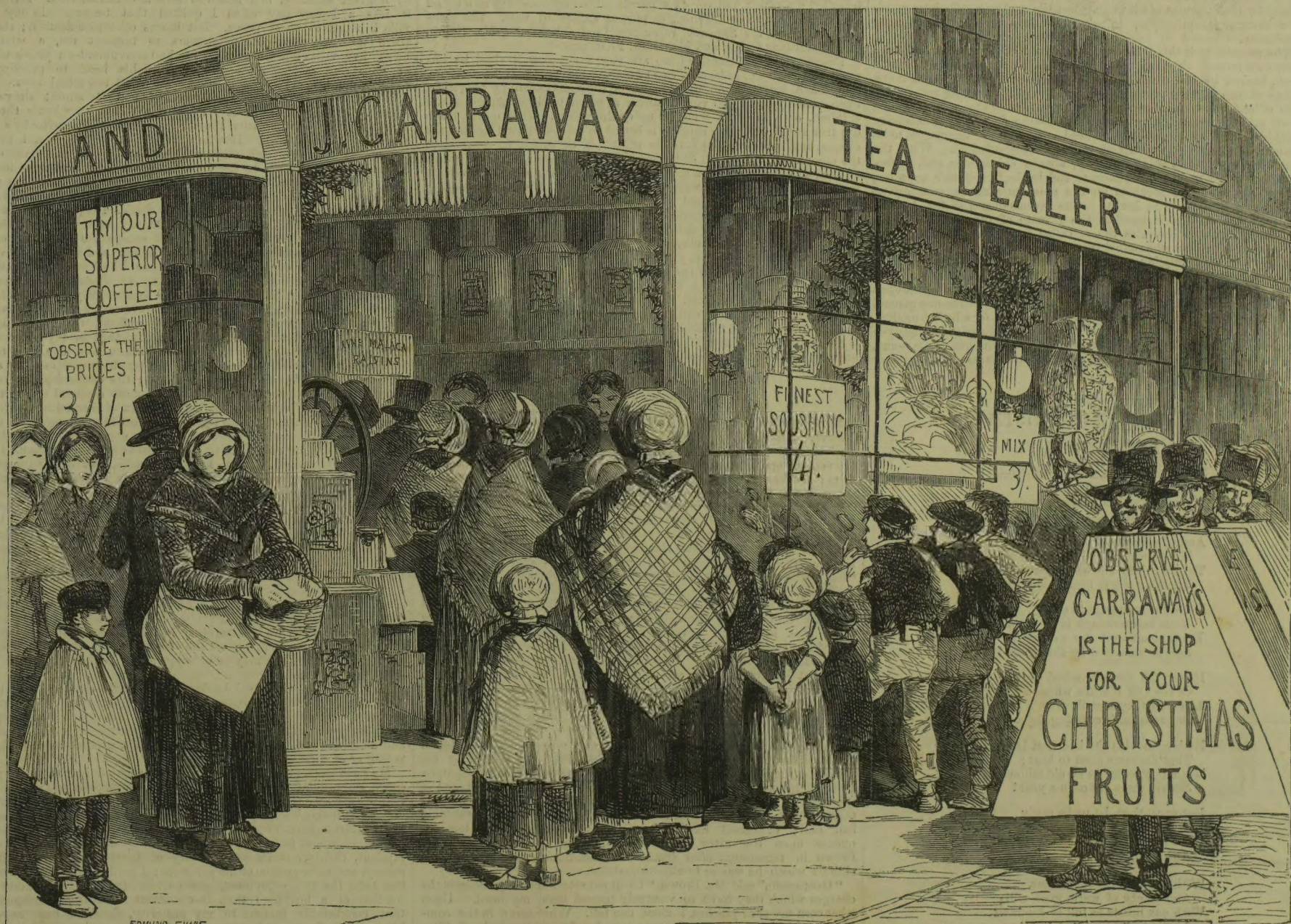
should not a superstition say, seeing that it has so often been the cause of speech in others?), "so many happy months shall you pass in the course of the year." Thus, according to popular tradition, English felicity is intimately bound up with Christmas pudding: the latter regulates the former—is the condition precedent. The pudding not only conveys a pleasing sensation during the minutes required for its mastication, but it spreads a genial glow over the ensuing year. Happy the man who eats of twelve plum-puddings; for, lo! his happiness is secured till Christmas comes again, and brings with it a chance that he may renew his lease of bliss. That is—if the saying be a true saying; and who would presume to inhale a spirit of scepticism at Christmas time; the time when old wives' tales are so generally allowed to pass current, that even the publisher, prompted by commercial wishes, turns to practical account the flash of belief that once a year manifests itself in an unbelieving age, and thinks he may win the public to an inspection of fairy lore, if he will only wrap up that lore in the guise of a "Christmas book."

The pride of housewives of the old school is never brought out so conspicuously as in the matter of Christmas puddings. Elderly female friends, who would withhold from each other no ordinary secrets, deem the recipe for their own peculiar pudding a mystery that friendship should not unfold. Hopes are expressed in each domicile, that the especial pudding there composed may turn out better than any which is created in other familiar mansions. With some it is no uncommon practice to order up the pudding when it is cold, that the chance-visitor, who did not make one at the Christmas dinner-table, may have an opportunity of appreciating its merits. Nay, fanatics in the culinary art have

been known to invite the whole of the Christmas party a day beforehand, that each guest might stir the pudding, before it was enveloped in the form-giving cloth. There is something in this initiatory ceremony, which renders even the making of the pudding a solemn act, and forcibly sanctifies the unique sanctity attached to this peculiarly British compound.

We have a story of a Frenchman, who essayed to make a Christmas pudding, and was perfectly correct in the choice of his materials, but forgot or never learned the all-important article of the cloth, so that, instead of a tempting globe, an unseemly shapeless mass made its appearance, quivering in a tureen. This story is dreadfully old, but its very antiquity seems to show that at a remote date the English regarded themselves as marked with the peculiar distinction of being a pudding-making people. As, in the mythical legends of most nations, some deity makes his appearance to introduce the peculiar art or product by which each nation afterwards became distinguished—one introducing the use of the plough, another planting the vine, a third stamping forth the horse—so do we greatly wonder that there is no legend according to which some friendly genius instructed the English in the art of pudding-making. "Britannia presenting her children with the first Pudding-cloth," would be no ill subject for a national fresco!

That there is something very solemn and mysterious in pudding-making, is amply proved by the superstitions and practices to which we have already alluded. But in what direction does the mystery point? As types of Christmas, the pudding and the misletoe are closely associated, and the misletoe we know comes to us from the Druids. Can it be that the pudding-cloth comes from the Druids also; that the use of



THE GROCER'S SHOP AT CHRISTMAS.—DRAWN BY FOSTER.

it was one of those secret arts which the ancient hierarchy withheld from the knowledge of the profane, and that, therefore, it has remained a characteristic possession of this island?

The admiration paid to the Grocer's shop-window on Christmas Eve is easily explained, when we regard the plum-pudding as the great national symbol, and reflect that the several ingredients exhibited are but the plum-pudding *in posse*. Granted that the grocer is an artist in his way, that he spreads out his currants into a black ground, whereon he draws fantastic patterns with a lighter-coloured fruit, that he arranges his luscious hemispheres (or rather hemi-ellipsoids) of citron and lemon so as to form symmetrical lines of partition, that he constructs slender columns of cinnamon—granted all this, we say, still it will not account for his establishment drawing a crowd exceeding that attracted by the jeweller, the silversmith, or the print-seller. His means of splendour, with all the addition of the holly-leaf and berry, are but humble in the ranks of magnificence. The true secret of the homage lies in the importance of the pudding. The crowd worships the pudding *in posse*. Thus do the Japanese adore the egg out of which the world was fashioned. Thus, according to mystical interpreters of Greek mythology, the goddess Leto or Latona is worshipped as the primitive darkness out of which light afterwards emanated. Those currants, those raisins, those rolls of cinnamon, those citron hemispheres are the Yule chaos out of which the pudding is to emerge.

If the form of the pudding, produced by the cloth, dates from the earliest ages, and offers itself as a type of oldest England, perhaps Britain, the material of the pudding, collected from the remotest parts of the globe, will form no inapt representation of the more modern commercial enterprise of our nation. When the Druids (assuming that they were the real originators) promulgated their idea of a pudding, it must have been something very different from the pudding of the present day. Sources of spice and other modern luxuries must have been unknown to the sacred barbarians. A globe of the simplest material, rolled from the mystic cloth, must have been the sole manifestation of their skill. But the plum-pudding of the present day is a result of that spirit, which, in its reckless promptings, sent Christopher Columbus to look for the East Indies the wrong way. That penetrating commercial spirit, which scorns difficulties of space and time, and which regards Horace's third Ode as so much rank heresy, cannot be more aptly typified than by the chief ornament of the Christmas dinner-table. Some thirty years ago, there was, we recollect, a nursery-book called the "History of a Plum-pudding," in which all the sources of the articles were explained, feebly in rhyme, but forcibly in pictures. It was a kind of inchoate "Peter Parley." There were views in the East Indies and the West Indies, to account for the spice and the sugar; and there were ships in full sail crossing the seas, to show how the dainties were conveyed to us; and the whole terminated with a juvenile party round a Christmas table, preparing to devour the product of many lands. The moral was grand, and might furnish a subject for a fresco companion to the one we have already recommended, "The nations of the earth presenting Britannia with the materials for a Christmas Pudding!"

Pursued to all its ramifications, the pudding is still symbolical. In some neighbourhoods—not the most aristocratic—the investigator into life will find notifications of the existence of a "pudding club," rendered conspicuous by a coloured portraiture of the object. This picture, which will often be found in the grocers' shops of the suburbs, is founded somewhat on a principle of exaggeration. The pudding, which is to be the prize of the club, is of enormous dimensions. Children, with rose-pink cheeks, are shown in attitudes of exultation at its appearance; and the words that visibly flow from their mother's lips explain to the *pater familias* the advantage of pudding-clubs in general: but still one looks uneasily at the pictorial display, and cannot help feeling that if the pudding rolls from its plate—a very likely occurrence—the whole family will be smothered as by an avalanche.

Our more opulent readers, probably, do not know what a "pudding-club" really is. It is a type of the reckless generosity and hospitality of our humbler classes, and therefore we have referred to it in illustration of our statement, that the pudding is symbolical throughout. Properly speaking, there is no club at all. The several subscribers pay a trifling amount per week, for a certain length of time, before Christmas Day; and when the total sum paid equals the value of materials for a pudding, these are duly delivered. The political economist naturally asks, "What is the use of this payment beforehand?" The tally system—a grand destroyer of the well-being of our humbler classes—is at once intelligible. The article of dress is taken first, and the instalments are paid afterwards; the purchaser securing the object of his wishes without ready money; and the vendor repaying himself for the absence of ready money by the largeness of his price. But the pudding-club is no result of a commercial principle; it takes root in a national sentimental peculiarity.

The peculiarity is this: the humbler classes of London cannot keep their own money. The stringent resolution to "put by" sixpence a week, backed by the most ingenious money-box, would break down before some call for the moment—a call probably arising not from a love of self, but from a good feeling for others. The visit of an old friend must be celebrated by a social glass—the distress of an unlucky neighbour must be immediately relieved—and how are these ends to be accomplished, except by an attack upon the reserved fund. With the humbler classes, there are, fortunately, always old friends, and, unfortunately, always unlucky neighbours; and, in the face of such a system, how could the amount requisite for the plum-pudding be ever raised, if the money were kept at home? The household god of the London family would ever be incensed at the absence of his proper offering. But the grocer, who institutes the so-called "pudding-club," officiates as banker. The man who cannot trust himself with money, pays it away in the form of a subscription; and thus it accumulates, in spite of generous impulses, till the proper sum is raised. Is not this a great national fact, that our hard-working people of the humbler ranks require a check upon their impulsive generosity, even when the enjoyment of the one general holiday in the long, long year is the premium offered for a little frugality?

When the plum-pudding symbolizes so much English antiquity—English superstition—English enterprise—English generosity—and, above all, English taste, can we wonder that the Grocer's Shop-window is a popular object on Christmas-Eve.

WELCOME TO CHRISTMAS.

BY MARY HOWITT.

He comes—the brave old Christmas!
His sturdy steps I hear;
We will give him a hearty welcome,
For he comes but once a year!

And of all our old acquaintance
'Tis he we like the best;
There's a jolly old way about him—
There's a warm heart in his breast.

He is not too proud to enter
Your house though it be mean;
Yet is company fit for a courtier,
And is welcomed by the Queen!

He can tell you a hundred stories
Of the Old World's whims and ways,
And how they merrily wish'd him joy
In our father's courting days.

He laughs with the heartiest laughter,
That does one good to hear;
'Tis a pity so brave an old fellow
Should come but once a year!

But once, then, let us be ready
With all that he can desire—
With plenty of holly and ivy,
And a huge log for the fire;

With plenty of noble actions,
And plenty of warm good-will;
With our hearts as full of kindness
As the board we mean to fill.

With plenty of store in the larder,
And plenty of wine in the bin;
And plenty of mirth for the kitchen;
Then open and let him in!

Oh, he is a fine old fellow—
His heart's in the truest place;
You may know that at once by the children,
Who glory to see his face.

For he never forgets the children,
They all are dear to him;
You'll see that with wonderful presents
His pockets are cramm'd to the brim.

Nor will he forget the servants,
Whether you've many or one;
Nor the poor old man at the corner;
Nor the widow who lives alone.

He is rich as a Jew, is Old Christmas,
I wish he would make me his heir;
But he has plenty to do with his money,
And he is not given to spare.

Not he—bless the good old fellow!
He hates to hoard his pelf;
He wishes to make all people
As gay as he is himself.

So he goes to the parish unions—
North, south, and west, and east—
And there he gives the paupers,
At his own expense, a feast.

He gives the old men tobacco,
And the women a cup of tea;
And he takes the pauper children,
And dances them on his knee.

I wish you could see those paupers
Sit down to his noble cheer,
You would wish, like them, and no wonder,
That he stay'd the livelong year.

Yes, he is the best old fellow
That ever on earth you met;
And he gave us a boon when first he came,
Which we can never forget.

So we will give him a welcome
Shall gladden his old heart's core!
And let us in good and gracious deeds
Resemble him more and more!

THE MISERABLE CLUB;

OR,

THE WOES OF BROWN AND WIGGINS.

BY LANCELOT WIGGINS.

OUR club has its anniversary meeting on Christmas Eve. We call ourselves the "Miserables," and think that we are justified in assuming that title. I still call it "our" club, although I am no longer a member. It formerly consisted of thirteen; but the year before last it dwindled down to nine. Last year the number was reduced to seven, by the expulsion of my friend Percy Brown and myself. I was the original founder and perpetual president of the club. I was proud of my position, and, though I consider myself unjustly expelled, I still hold that club to be the brightest spot in a world of sorrow. All the members are miserable upon principle. Without sufficient proof of misery, no one can be admitted into that select circle. One peculiarity of our club is, that although upon sufficient proof of happiness we expel a member, we never excommunicate him: we deny his right to be called a member, but we allow him to attend our meetings as a friend and visitor, and to do anything he pleases except to vote. The principal members are Serjeant Wrangles, Lord Fitzboodle, Mr. Smith, Mr. Penultimus Green, and Mr. Hugh Fitzhugh.

The rules of the Miserable Club are, that every year it shall be imperative that the expulsion of two or more members shall be formally moved and seconded, on the ground of disqualification by happiness. Such commonplace and vulgar misery as poverty, ill health, ungrateful children, or a scolding wife, are no qualifications. They do not reach our true standard. The accused is bound to defend himself against the charge, and to adduce proofs of his misery, if he desire to continue in the enjoyment of the high distinction of being one of us. If the proofs be deemed satisfactory by a majority of the club, he is allowed to remain in full possession of the privileges of membership. If not, he is politely informed that he may go and join the outer world of the happy. By these means the members periodically fortify themselves in their misery, refresh their sympathy for their brothers' woes, and maintain the principles of the club in their utmost vigour.

The first case decided last year was that of Mr. Percival Brown, a much-respected member of the club, and a man whose fame is national property. Mr. Brown is a wit and a philosopher, a man of genius, and a man of common sense. Let no cuckoo (without wings) repeat the old song, that genius and common sense never work together. I will maintain against all disputants, what and wheresoever, that there is no genius without common sense; and that it is a stupid fallacy to imagine with that great poet, who gave his own dictum the lie, that

Great wit and madness surely are allied,
And their partitions do their bonds divide.

Mr. Brown's writings are highly esteemed, and not more so than they deserve. Although his reputation is so great, he is as modest and simple-hearted as a child. He is in the very prime of his manhood; on the vernal slope of the mountain of life; pursues the avocation that he loves; and has no cause of complaint that the world is ungrateful to his merits, or denies him bread while living, upon the understanding that he is to have a stone when dead.

It was Lord Fitzboodle who undertook to prove that, in justice to the club, Mr. Brown ought to be expelled. He dwelt very emphatically and severely upon the various elements of happiness that united in his life, character, and circumstances. "Mr. Brown," said his Lordship, "has a wife, such grace, such modesty, such wit, such virtue, such good temper, such unaffected piety, such a small white hand, such a pure complexion, such a captivating smile, such bright eyes, and such a happy soul looking through them, are seldom united so happily as in Mrs. Brown. I have been at Mr. Brown's house. I have shared his conversation and his hospitality. His house is a gem of good order and good taste. I am positive, moreover, from what I have seen, that Mr. Brown loves and is beloved by Mrs. Brown; that, in fact, all the affection which he bestows, she returns with usury. Knowing all these things, as I do, I must say, that, however much I may honour, respect, and even envy Mr. Brown, he is not a fit member of our club."

Serjeant Wrangles was Mr. Brown's next accuser. The Serjeant, miserable man, makes between £7000 and £8000 per annum by his profession, and calculates, with a very good prospect of success, upon a judgship for his declining years. He is the leader of a circuit, and of the court in which he practises; and is not only a lawyer, but something better. The Serjeant corroborated all that Lord Fitzboodle had said; expressed himself in the strongest terms of bar-e-loquence upon the utter absence of delicacy displayed by Mr. Brown in remaining, after repeated remonstrances, a member of a club for which he was so totally disqualified.

"Gentlemen," said Mr. Brown, "I will not retort upon my accusers the charges which they have so wantonly heaped upon my head. Upon what corn my shoe pinches, I alone can tell. What screw in the complex machinery of my happiness is out of order, it is not Lord Fitz-

boodle or Serjeant Wrangles that can determine. So far from being disqualified for the club, I believe that I only am properly qualified among all the gentlemen present; and that, in fact, Mr. Wiggins, our respected President, Lord Fitzboodle, Serjeant Wrangles, and every one of you, except myself, are interlopers and pretenders. The only real and legitimate miserable is Percival Brown. It is most true that I have a wife and children, whom I dearly love; that I enjoy good health; that my spirits are generally light, and my conscience tolerably clear. But what then? The woes of humanity do not pass my door without looking in upon me, and putting my manhood to the proof. All men have their particular liking—some pleasure which they prize above all others. Most men contrive to indulge in it. I alone am an exception. I doat upon quiet, and I have a most sensitive ear against discord. Hence these tears. *C'est pourquoi je m'enrage*. I cannot obtain quiet. The boys of Savoy, with their accursed organs—the savage bag-pipers of the Highlands—old hurdy-gurdy women— itinerant ballad-singers—mackerel men—jew boys—and a whole army of similar pests, that swarm in this metropolis of London, wherein I am compelled to live, combine to assault my nerves by horrible noises, by mock music, by barbarous discords, and to render study and seclusion almost impossible, and I verily believe to drive me mad ultimately, to the ruin of my family. When I married, I unluckily purchased a house. Its walls were of the ordinary thickness. But, alas! brick walls were no protection. The house did not stand alone; it was one of a terrace. I incurred considerable expense in furnishing and embellishing this house, and thought I should be at peace in my study, amid my books. But no sooner was I fairly installed, than my miseries began. A young lady, fresh from boarding-school, with all the rawness of sixteen imprinted upon her pretty face, made her appearance in the next house within ten days after my furnishing was complete. A piano-forte, that never was allowed to rest, gave me hourly proof of her existence. The vile instrument was placed with its back against my wall, and every jingle of its strings was perfectly audible in every part of my house. My drawingroom was no longer my own. My study was so far from being impervious against her abominable squalling, that I heard every sound as plainly as if she had been at my elbow. I was inhuman enough to hate all young ladies for her sake, and to wish that I had been a despotic sovereign, that I might have issued an edict for the utter destruction, breaking up, and annihilation of all piano-fortes and musical instruments whatsoever, and for the incarceration for life in a convent or in a dungeon of any and every shrieking, screaming, yelling, sol-fa-ing miss that dared to learn music and singing in any house, dwelling, or tenement, that was not removed for a couple of miles at least from the study of Percival Brown. The slop-builders of London came in for their due share of my wrath—rogues infinitely worse than slop-tailors, and dealers in 'sham' to a far larger and more vexatious extent. Day and night, noon and even, the discord stirred up by my tormentor filled me with vindictive thoughts. The jingle of her piano-forte and her agonising shrieks under the discipline of her music-master, and in her solitary hours while she practised his lessons, racked me with spasmodic misery. I sometimes flung down my useless pen in an agony of despair, and resolved to commit suicide if she did not immediately desist. I cannot tolerate divine harmony itself—much as I love it—when I am engaged in writing; and there are times when not even the sweet strains of a Jenny Lind, or a Sontag, could fill me with any other emotions than those of annoyance that they distracted my attention, and whirled me away into spheres where mental labour is impossible. But to be persecuted by one whose most successful attempts at music were foul murder, was more than I could bear. I died a daily death. I was sacrificed by slow torment to the demon of discord; and my brain, that might have teemed with gentle fancies—with wisdom or with wit—seethed and simmered with fiendish thoughts of revenge. But I restrained myself, and I did nothing desperate. At the end of three months, however, the torment became still more insupportable. An old gentleman took the house on the other side of me. He had nothing in the world to do but to weed his little garden—talk to a parrot—scold the servants—and play the violoncello! Oh, that monster violoncello! Oh, that horrible fiddle! From six in the morning till ten at night, it was never silent for above half an hour at a time. With what a genuine hatred I hated that old man! He could play but one tune; and, as he played it imperfectly, he was always learning it. Often and often have I longed and yearned to commit justifiable homicide upon him. I hear him yet—the abominable tones of the hateful instrument still resound in my brain! Human nature could not stand the double infliction of the young girl's treble and the old man's bass. I sold my house at a great sacrifice, and removed into a detached villa. I thought it was a happy day when I quitted that terrace. In my new villa I hoped to be at peace. But it was otherwise decreed; though there were no next-door neighbours to torment me, a wretched being five villas off—an *employé* of the Government—a *précis* writer, or something of that sort—took it into his head to practise the *cornet-à-piston* every evening, in defiance of all the moral laws. This was a misery I had not dreamed of, and it almost drove me frantic. I writhed under it for about a fortnight, when a thought struck me that I might cure the disease of the *précis*-writer by a little homeopathic treatment. Intensely as I hate the bagpipes, I hired a wheezy Highlander, and engaged him to take his stand every evening in the road opposite to the villa where my new tormenter lodged, and strike up some barbarous pibroch as soon as the horn-practice commenced. I must own that I derived very considerable enjoyment from the struggle that ensued betwixt the rivals. The piper was the more strenuous of the two, and at last the horn-blower became inaudible amid the rushing torrents of sound that escaped from the bag of his opponent. The *précis*-writer was fairly foiled, and I have no doubt bestowed as many curses upon the pipes, as I had bestowed upon his *cornet-à-piston*. I do not know whether he discovered the secret, but the Highlander played me false. I incautiously let him into the secret of my motives, and he forthwith gave notice to all the organ-grinders, hurdy-gurdy misers, and ruffians that play brazen instruments in the streets of the metropolis, that in my house there lived a man who hated the annoyance of music, and one who might be induced to bribe off his persecutors and purchase quietness for a fair consideration. I have had no peace since: the *cornet-à-piston* is still heard in the calm evening air, discoursing most eloquent misery to me. An Italian rascal with a perambulating box of discord as large as a moderate-sized cottage, drawn upon a waggon by a strong horse, sometimes stations himself for a full hour at the corner of my street, and has again and again refused to be conciliated under half-a-crown. I have tried the system of bribery and of coercion, but both have proved useless for my effectual relief. To bribe, is like anointing mys- with honey to keep away the wasps, or standing unarmed on the road-side with a pile of silver and gold before me to deter robbers. Oh, the miseries of a London street to the man of quiet habits and reflective mind! What is to become of Philosophy, of Science of Poetry, of Music itself, if these pests who grind organs in every street are to be allowed to pursue their trade? There are Italian organ-boys in London sufficient to mar all the metaphysics of all the Fichtes and Schellings that ever lived, and to destroy the intellect and poetry of any new Shakespeare or Milton that this age might otherwise produce. If I could live out of London, I would; but I would as soon die, as be altogether banished from that most delicious of capitals. The miseries of all the other members of the club are as nothing to mine. You may be unhappy; but I—miserable that I am—am driven frantic!"

This was the story told by Mr. Brown. His case was duly put to the club; and it was resolved unanimously, that, great as the misery was, it was scarcely a qualification for membership. He was expelled accordingly; it being understood, of course, that he was free to remain and make himself miserable in our company, without any privilege of voting or of membership.

My turn came next; and, having been accused by the public prosecutor, Fitzboodle—seconded, as usual, by Wrangles—of being too happy I stated my case as follows, and claimed the full privilege of misery:—"My surname," said I, "is Wiggins; my Christian name is Lancelot. I am thirty-three years of age. I have an estate of £10,000 per annum, clear and unencumbered, left to me by my father—a successful, prudent, thrifty merchant of the city of London. I inherit all his money, and some portion of his prudence: I neither hoard nor squander; but take the full enjoyment, and no more (not to the shadow of a fraction of a farthing) than is consistent with the maintenance of that comfortable income to my posterity, should I have any. I have no wife—a circumstance which I sometimes think is an

increase of misery. This is a point which, however, remains to be proved, as I am engaged to be married to the most beautiful, the most gentle, the most warm-hearted, the most— But why should I detail her merits or her charms? It is a matter in which the club has no concern. I cannot deny that I have many reasons to be grateful, in addition to those already mentioned. I have been largely endowed by nature with strength and the capacity of enjoyment. She has given me a good constitution; I eat well, drink well, and sleep well. I have picked up, since I left school and college, a pretty fair education, and think every day to have been mis-spent in which I have not learnt something. I have a keen sense of beauty. I love it in every shape, animate or inanimate, visible, audible or tangible, natural or artificial. I consider all nature to be my inheritance, my birth-right, my own property, of the usufruct of which nothing can deprive me, except the loss of my reason. Fortune may rob me of my £10,000 per annum; but she shall not rob me of my landscapes—my morning walks—my evening rambles—my delight in the beauties, the graces, the sublimities, and the terrors of nature. I consider myself, generally speaking, to be at peace with all mankind. As for womankind, I love and esteem them all, provided they are not ugly; and, lest any member of the club should mistake my meaning, I assert, in the most emphatic manner, that whatever the age of a woman may be, and whatever may be the colour of her eyes or her hair, and whatever the shape of her nose, there never yet existed, and never will exist, a good-tempered woman who was ugly in the estimation of Lancelot Wiggins. I have my political principles too, which I cherish with as much pertinacity as is consistent with my firm conviction that I was a greater fool a year ago than I am now; and that in a year hence I shall look back upon my present state of moral and political knowledge with a feeling akin to pity for my former blindness. I may say of myself generally, that I am the enemy of ignorance, oppression, and intemperance, and that I never behold ignorance without a wish to become instrumental in removing it. I have moreover a pretty strong notion, notwithstanding my own misery, that the world is not so bad a place as some people represent it to be; and that, in fact, there are many Utopias, which only remain Utopias because men obstinately persist in calling them so. Feeling acutely my own misery, I have a fellow-feeling for the miseries of others, however unlike my own they may happen to be. I endeavour to extend my sympathies beyond the folds of my own cloak, or the prickles of my own shell. In so doing I discover many evils, which I should rejoice to remove, or, failing in that, to alleviate. It may be supposed that, with all these advantages, I ought to be a happy man. But 'ought to be' and 'be' are two forms of the verb that do not always consort together as lovingly, and fit in as mathematically, as eternal morality and justice intended that they should. I am not simply unhappy, but I am miserable; and the more miserable, because my obstinate fellow-creatures, give, instead of their sympathy, their contemptuous pity or scornful laughter, as their only answer to my grievances. 'Mr. Wiggins suffers from hypochondria,' says a wise member. The wise member is wrong. Mr. Wiggins suffers from no such thing. He indulges in no distempered fancies. He does not, and never did, imagine himself to be a tea-pot—or a jug—or a punch-ladle—or a roasting-jack—or a pair of tongs—or a pump-handle—or a beer-barrel—or the Pope—or an Emperor. 'What is the matter, then?' it may be asked; 'Are you a debtor or a creditor?'—or a disappointed author acidulated into a critic?—or a broken-down orator?—or a damaged statesman?—or a *roué* with shattered nerves?—or one who has committed some dreadful crime? Perhaps you murdered Eliza Grimwood, or the barmaid in the Regent's Park? To which I reply, that I am none of these things—and *did* none of these things, and that I cannot say that I suffer from pangs of conscience. I may, it is true, have committed in my time some faults and follies. If I have, I have suffered for them; and though I do feel a regret now and then, and a sense of repentance for peccadilloes and follies, the feeling never deepens into remorse. My conscience, all things considered, does not dig any very sharp or excruciating spurs into my side. In addition to all this, I can say that I have neither been jilted by woman nor deceived by man; and that I neither crave honour, power, or money from a human being. I have more money than I want, and far more than I can spend. I would rather be plain Lancelot Wiggins than Sir Lancelot, or Viscount Wiggins, or the Marquis de Wiggins, or the Duke de Fitzwiggins. The idea is ridiculous. A garter for Wiggins! Wiggins has two. A star for Wiggins! Wiggins has as much of all the stars, and of the sun and moon besides, as is enjoyed even by the Emperor of China. I know friend Fitzboodle will laugh when he hears my misery. Let him laugh! and prove thereby the folly of his wisdom! I tell my tale to others than him; and am sure of this, that all the ladies in the land—from Queen Victoria, God bless her! down to the humblest housemaid in a London lodging-house—will sympathize with me, however great or long-continued may be the curl upon the lip, or the arch upon the eye-brow of the self-indulgent or stiffly reasonable of the other sex. Without more words, my misery is this: I am persecuted by my fellow-creatures, whom I love; I am the martyr to a social nuisance; I am the victim of my over-sensitive nose! Civilised men have entered into a conspiracy to imitate barbarians, and to poison the delicious air, my property as much as it is theirs! They smoke tobacco, and make pestilential furnaces of their jaws. 'They feed upon ashes, and cannot deliver their souls.' They chew or masticate the poison, and turn their mouths into abominations. They grind it into a powder, and make dust-holes of their unoffending nostrils. I, and the women, and the children, and all the birds of the air, and all the beasts of the field (a clear and very decided majority of the creation), are assaulted, and distressed, and poisoned by this daily increasing evil. The misery I suffer, who shall tell? The nuisance offends both nose and eyes at every step I take in the busy thoroughfares of the world. It is not only men, patricians and plebeians, snobs and snobissimi, law-makers and law-breakers, head-workers and hand-workers, and fellows who never work at all, but boys in their teens (abominable young snoblings!), who indulge in the filthy habit of smoking, and poisoning the clear atmosphere! I must confess that I never see a boy smoking, without feeling a strong impulsive movement in my toe, urging it forcibly towards a part of his person that shall be nameless. Some day or other, I feel confident, I shall indulge my toe in the luxury it covets. Should I be tempted, I shall cheerfully resign myself to the consequences, which cannot be worse than a newspaper paragraph, with my respectable name in it, headed 'SAVAGE ASSAULT,' and a fine of forty shillings, or may be five pounds, inflicted by the stipendiary Solon of a metropolitan police-court. In my house a smoker never enters—if I can help it. I would discharge the best footman that ever wore plush, if he dared even to take a pinch of snuff within my gates. I would immolate my estimable butler—he is sixty-five years of age, and has been forty-five in the service of the Wiggenses—*père et fils*—and has a head white as the driven snow; yet even that good man should receive no mercy at my hands if I discovered him with a pipe in his mouth. Thank heaven, there is one place on the face of the earth that I can keep sacred to temperance, cleanliness, and a pure atmosphere; I am not to be poisoned there! So strong is my aversion, that I have never once asked our curate, the Rev. Mr. Snodland, to dinner, since I saw him take a pinch of snuff on the pulpit stairs, though I asked him regularly every Sunday before that time. If I had a son who smoked, he should not inherit one sixpence of my money, or one square inch of my acres. All should go to my daughter; and if I had no daughter, I would pension aged governesses, upon condition that a single pinch of snuff taken by any one should be the forfeiture of the pension. May I be spared, O pitying Heaven! the inexpressible misery of a smoking son! Some of my friends say that I should be too happy in the world, were it not for the vexations and annoyances which I suffer from this cause. I dare say they are right. Every man must have a screw loose somewhere or other in his mental or physical machinery. By having this strong and growing aversion to tobacco, an aversion that shall never quit me as long as the breath remains in my body, I feel that I am human and mortal, and doomed to suffer. There is a continual screw loose; there is a button always off; there is a sore place perpetually about me, defying cure. Lancelot Wiggins, with his sound constitution, in the prime of his life, with ten thousand pounds per annum, and no desire for another sixpence, or for a title, or for a seat in Parliament, is on a level with humanity. There is a drop of poison in his cup. There is a cloud of dense tobacco smoke upon his mental horizon, which obscures to his eyes the glory of the heavens and the beauty of humanity."

Lord Fitzboodle, with a most irreverent and unfeeling laugh at my misery, and at the manner in which I had narrated it, declared that I was quite disqualified for the club. He alleged that I was too happy;

and that, were it not for the petty annoyances which I suffered from tobacco—annoyances which I might remove by learning to smoke like other people—I would, in fact, be so happy in the world, as to run a great risk of being spoiled, and rendered vain, conceited, hard, cold, and unfeeling. "Besides," he added, "I think our friend Wiggins is delighted to have something to hate, and that, were it not for his dislike of tobacco, which always gives his mind employment, and affords a safe and harmless conduit for his spleen, he would be in a condition ten times more unhappy than he now represents himself to be." Hereupon, he went into a long dissertation in praise of tobacco, which, at the time he made it, both amused and enraged me. I was not aware that so much could be said in defence of the dirty weed, and of the abominable habit of smoking, and I re-produce it, in order that the denial of the truth of every part of it which I made may go forth to the world along with it, and that I may denounce, in the most emphatic manner, the sophistry of such reasoning. I verily believe that a man who could talk so well in praise of tobacco, could vindicate murder, or, like De Quincey, treat it as one of the Fine Arts.

"Surely," said Fitzboodle, "there must be some virtue in tobacco of which people who hate it are unaware, when we find it such a favourite among men in all climates and latitudes—among men civilised, semi-civilised, and barbarous—among men of all religions and modes of thought—among men who agree in nothing but their love of it."

For thy sake, tobacco, I
Would do anything but die,

says Charles Lamb; and Turk and Christian, John Bull and Uncle Sam, the Dutchman and the Spaniard, the Kamschatkadale and the Cherokee, the Greenland and the Negro, the Brazilian and the Chinaman, would join in the chorus with all their hearts. We have but to think of the quantities of tobacco which they severally consume, to be convinced of their large affection for it. Snuff, pipe, cigar, or quid—in one shape or the other, it is the friend, the companion, the delight of man. The universality of its use, and the greatness of its fascination, prove its virtue."

"All balderdash!" said I. "You might as well say that the universality of the belief in witchcraft in the days of James I. proved witchcraft."

"Order, order!" said Serjeant Wrangles.

"The belief in witchcraft disappeared before the increasing light of civilisation," continued Fitzboodle. "When witchcraft went out, tobacco came in. And, besides, the more civilisation has increased in the world, the more tobacco has been consumed. The growth of the one keeps pace with the love of the other, and *vice versa*. The discoveries of science are made by men who blow clouds of tobacco smoke. When Homer lived there was no smoking, but there was also no steam-engine. When Plato taught there were no cigars, but, at the same time, there were no railroads. Let us inquire not only what are the fascinations of tobacco, but its effect upon the mind and body of those who use it. By the general consent of all who smoke, it is conceded that tobacco has a soothing influence upon the brain and nerves. It calms irritability. No man can be angry with a pipe or a cigar in his mouth. It disposes the mind to peace, charity, and good-will. The Indian phrase, 'the calumet of peace,' has passed into our English idiom. The smoke of gunpowder is warlike; that of tobacco is redolent of negotiation, truce, peace, and reconciliation. If a man will do an ill-natured thing, he must put down his pipe to do it. Then, again, the pipe or the cigar is a companion. He who smokes is not alone, even in the extreme of solitude. He has a friend in his mouth, who administers consolation to him for the hard rub he may have received from the world. Smoke disposes the mind to meditation and self-communion. To know one's self, has always been held the greatest proof of wisdom; and how much self-knowledge is acquired in those long-drawn whiffs of the solitary smoker, when, heedless of the world without, his thoughts are entirely concentrated upon that wondrous microcosm—himself? What is it that cheers the hard life of the sailor? Tobacco. What is it that enables the soldier to march o'er bog and brake, to ford rivers, to penetrate through wildernesses of snow, to endure the ice of the frigid and the scorching heat of the torrid zone? Tobacco. What is it that reconciles the man to the world, who has a large bill due to-morrow and not a stiver to meet it? Tobacco. Did any man ever meditate suicide with a pipe or cigar in his mouth? Never! and no man ever will. The influence of the plant is so genial, that when any thought of the kind shoots across the brain of the dejected and the forlorn, they have but to light a pipe or cigar and be reconciled to their miserable existence. All ideas of the rope or the razor, of prussic acid or a leap from Waterloo-bridge, vanish before the perfumes of a choice Havannah. The troubles of the mind yield to the delicious influence of the blessed weed. And great as are these benefits and fascinations, all derivable from tobacco, I hold that there are many others which should make men in a high state of civilisation grateful to Providence for so splendid and beneficent a gift. Worn with the undue pressure upon the brain consequent upon the fierce competition of the present day—debilitated rather than depressed—overwrought in the struggle to subsist, or to maintain a respectable position in the world, the man of shattered nerves has a friend that lies gentle as sleep, soft as down, luxurious as sunshine, upon his senses. That friend is tobacco. Even when the nerves are not shattered—when the man is sound of wind and limb, and unannoyed by the cares and sorrows of the world—when the mind is, as it were, fallow, and waiting to bring forth a crop of ideas, the balmy influence of tobacco predisposes it to fructification. None but those who have smoked know the heavenly luxury of a cigar after dinner. It is then, that, reclining in an easy-chair, or stretched at full-length upon a sofa, we are aware of certain half-formed thoughts and fancies which go flitting across the camera-lucida of the inner life; it is then that the soul itself seems to float lazily, quietly, beautifully, and beatifically—like a light cloud upon the evening sky, looking down complacently upon the clay above which it soars, yet from which it sprang, and to which it belongs. Supposing the cynic to be reclining on a sofa, at his own fire-side, under the light of his own resplendent chandelier—comfortable, as all cynics are—are there not countless illustrations of the vanity of the world to be afforded him by the clouds of thin blue smoke which he discharges from his mouth and nostrils? The love of woman! Alas! in what is it better or more substantial than the vapours of his Havannah? Possession of gold! Alas! and double and trebly alas! what signifies it? What is it worth after it has been acquired? Will it repay the grey and aching head, or the seared and aching heart? Will it soothe the troubled conscience? Will it bring healing to the sick? No; but tobacco will; and therefore are the fumes of pipe or cigar, in producing this effect, more valuable by far than the possession of treasure. Is fame more worthy? Not a whit. 'Tis but a breath, and is even more unsubstantial than the whiff of a meerschaum. Oftentimes, indeed, it is far more evanescent. Equally apt for its illustration of another phase of human life and character, is the smoke which the smoker exhales. Should he be an epicurean, easy and good-natured, at peace with himself and with all the world; determined to extract from the world, while he lives in it, all the harmless enjoyment that he can; an enemy of no man, but simply the enemy of care, vexation, annoyance, and all the rude and strong passions that might disturb the ceaseless serenity of his soul—the light fumes of his hookah or his Havannah afford him abundant opportunities to moralise upon earthly vanity. What, for instance, is grief, that it should weigh upon his immortal mind? 'Tis nothing—'tis but a puff of smoke, and it is gone. What is anger, that it should lodge in his breast—and what is there in the world that is worth being angry about? Nothing, nothing—unless the thin fleecy cloud that hovers above his face as he puffs his cigar be worthy of being deemed a something, and of entering into the large list of respectable entities. Spite, jealousy, malice, envy—all the other little mean paltry passions—are infinitely less than smoke in the estimation of such a man as this is. As for the big, grandiloquent tragic passions, they are no better than the little ones. They are like the smoke out of an evil and malevolent furnace, not to be compared with the smoke of his pipe, which is altogether benevolent. But, after all, the principal virtue of tobacco is that it is friendly of itself, and is the cause of friendliness in others. If two men have ever been in the habit of smoking together, there is peace between them. To smoke with a man in modern times, is tantamount to the practice among the ancients of breaking bread with him. It is a sign of hospitality and good-will. It may not always make people friends, but it prevents them from becoming enemies while the smoking lasts. We are told that many a friendship which adorned a life, and only concluded with it, arose in the early ages of the world, over a crust of bread. I have no doubt that many a

friendship, equally pure, disinterested, and constant, owes its origin, in the present age, to a proffered cigar; to the demand for, and the concession of, a light; or to the graceful and common courtesy of a pinch out of a neighbour's snuff-box."

"The same friendships would exist if there were no such thing as tobacco in the world," said I. "Human nature was not born of the tobacco plant. The widely-spread prevalence of the habit of smoking cannot be urged as proving its benefit. I do not deny that smokers find an enjoyment in their habit. I admit it, and deplore it. Multitudes of men and women, in Europe and America, find an enjoyment in drinking to excess of gin, whiskey, rum, and brandy; other multitudes still more dense, in Asia, find an enjoyment equally fierce in drinking laudanum and eating opium; but are we to defend the gin-drinker, the whiskey-swiller, and the opium-eater, because he is not alone in his insanity, and because he has the countenance of the society in which he moves for his beastly indulgence? Let me retract the offensive epithet, oh ye four-legged beasts! Ye live according to the laws of nature, and only eat and drink what she has prescribed for you. No animal except man indulges in intoxication, whether of tobacco, of alcohol, or of opium. The pig, it is true, has been known to get drunk, when man took advantage of his ignorance, and placed the brewer's wash in his way; and the goose has also been observed to become slightly intoxicated, when betrayed into it by man; but even pig and goose revolt indignantly against tobacco. No temptation can make them tolerate smoke for an instant. Boileau has said that—

Tous les hommes sont foux, et malgré tous leurs soins,
Ne diffèrent entre eux, que du plus au du moins.

And Pope after him has repeated that Nature can do no more than tell us we are fools. If proof were needed to confirm the dicta of these poetical philosophers, the passion for tobacco would of itself be sufficient. Disguise it as you will, tobacco is poison—poison to the nose, poison to the palate, poison to the lungs, and poison to the stomach. In the form of smoke, it is doubly poisonous—for it not only poisons the smoker himself, but the harmless inhaler of the common atmosphere, who has the misfortune to be in the same room, or on the top of the same coach with him. Good results may spring from the use of a poison, if administered medicinally. Were tobacco only taken by men as prussic acid is, in obedience to the prescription of a skilful physician, I should cheerfully acknowledge, that, like prussic acid, or any other respectable poison created by an all-wise and all-beneficent Providence, it had its uses. But men do not use tobacco as a medicine—they abuse it as a luxury. They love it for its unwholesome excitement; and all the delicious sensations which you have described as flowing from it are produced by opium, the use of which even you would not defend. Nevertheless, every argument for tobacco is an argument for alcohol and for opium. If tobacco be found useful as a stimulant, so are other poisons; and if stimulants be so good, so necessary, and so delightful, why should we confine ourselves to the one poison, when all the poisons of all-bounteous Nature are before us? Why do we leave opium to the Chinese only? The strength temporarily given by laudanum to weak and nervous people, who addict themselves to its use, is quite as great as that afforded by tobacco; and the bright visions that may be conjured up in the diseased brain of him who eats opium, are far greater than any that dawn upon the dark mind of the tobacco smoker; but we think we shall escape the penalty more easily with tobacco than with either of them. But all such excitements are ultimately injurious. Nature is inexorable. She exacts a penalty for all transgressions. She is filled with benevolence, but she never pardons a wrong done against her Majesty and her laws. Nature cannot forgive a wrong against Nature. She punishes the use of tobacco, in all its forms of smoking, snuffing, and chewing, and has decreed that its abuse shall destroy the stomach and emaciate the frame; that it shall create unnatural thirst, and consequently lead to over-indulgence in the use of spirituous liquors. She has also decreed that it shall make the teeth black or yellow, cause the breath to become offensive, and that it shall disorder and impair the intellect."

"I grant you," said Fitzboodle, "that these are the results of the abuse of tobacco. I only defended its use. A man may abuse bread itself, and overgorge himself with dough, French rolls, or pastry crust; but are we to denounce corn for that? An alderman may take too much turtle; but is not turtle good? and are we to denounce its use because it makes a man gouty and apoplectic when taken immoderately?"

"Mere sophistry," replied I; "the smallest use of that which is not wholesome, or necessary, is an abuse. As for your pictures of the cynic and the epicure, they are—

Beni, ma mal trovati.

They are very well as pictures; but they are irrelevant to the matter of tobacco. Pope, that great poet, who was no smoker, outshines your cynic in his contempt for fame, riches, and all the *etceteras* upon which you have dwelt. Solomon declared that 'all things were vanity and vexation of spirit.' He wanted no Havannah fumes to teach him that."

"He might have excepted the cigar from the catalogue of vanities, had he known it. Judging from his wisdom in other respects, he would have assuredly done so," said Fitzboodle.

"I was about to observe that illustrations of the vanity of all human enjoyments abounded before tobacco ever was used or abused by man. As for your epicurean, he would be but a poor and sham epicurean who could not nurse his philosophy with tens of thousands of similes better than those you have put into his mouth, in your miserable apology for the intoxication produced by tobacco. Cynicism and epicureanism need no illustrations from the pipe. They were known to and took their names among a people who never smoked. Could you imagine Plato with a meerschaum? or, Socrates with a cigar? or, Diogenes with a quid?"

"Of course, I could," replied Fitzboodle; "and love them all the better for the fancy. Only imagine what Shakespeare is, and what he might have been if he had smoked!"

"Thank Heaven!" I said, "that Homer and Shakespeare were equally guiltless of tobacco. I reflect upon that fact, and am less miserable. And now, having denounced the 'weed' in prose, I will give you my malediction upon it in rhyme:—

SONG.

Upon his mouth may curses fall,
May it be dead to savour;
His mellow fruits be cinders dry,
His wines devoid of flavour;
His bread be sawdust in his jaws;
And may his teeth, so black oh,
Turn all his sweets to bitter sour—
The wretch who chews tobacco!

Upon his nose may curses light,
May odours never charm it;
May garden flowers, and woods and bowers,
Yield noxious scents to harm it;
May all Arabia's spice exhale
Foul gas to make it suffer,
Who makes a dust-hole of his nose—
The vile tobacco-snuffer!

May never lady press his lips,
His proffer'd love returning,
Who makes a furnace of his mouth,
And keeps its chimney burning!
May each true woman shun his sight,
For fear his fumes might choke her;
And none but hags, who smoke themselves,
Have kisses for a smoker!"

Thus ended my denunciation of the poisonous weed. It was the last speech I ever made as a member of the club. My right and title to the privilege of membership were put to the vote and solemnly denied; and it was forthwith notified to me, that I was to consider myself for the future as an outer barbarian, whose company the club would be at all times miserable to enjoy. I am, however re-eligible, and shall put in a claim on another occasion to be restored to my position. If elected, as I hope to be by next Christmas, it is my intention to examine the claims of Fitzboodle and Wrangle to the title of miserable, and avenge upon them the injustice they have done me. Oh, that I were an absolute sovereign! Smoking in the streets should be an offence to be punished by decapitation; and no man should smoke in his own room, under the penalty of an annual tax of seventy-five per cent. on his income!

C. M.



PUNCH AND JUDY AT CHRISTMAS.—DRAWN BY LEECH.

CHRISTMAS INTERIORS.

BY THE OLD BACHELOR.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEECH.

I AM sure my title is appropriate, for Christmas is peculiarly the season of Interiors in England. Its charities cluster round bright and crackling hearths; its memories are of families met, often from long separation, round happy household tables; its festivities are all associated with close-drawn curtains, glowing fires, soft carpets, ruddy lights, familiar faces, the prattle and laughter of young voices, the unspoken love of man and wife; the union of the past, the present, and the future in grandparents, parents, and children; with all the sweetest and most satisfying sights, and sounds, and sentiments of home. Festivals change their character with the scene of their celebration. When the holly, and mistletoe, and laurestinus make a green bower of the village church, and the robin nestles under the sheltering layers of the snow-thatched yew, at most times that the words of peace upon earth, and goodwill towards men are solemnly spoken from an English pulpit, what wonder that few of us recall, in connexion with Christmas, the broad and sun-scorched plains of Eastern Chaldaea, with their sapphire night-sky, unclouded stars, and watching shepherds. Milton, in his "Hymn to the Nativity," has gone so far as to transfer to the Oriental scene of the Nativity the snow and wintry bleakness of our own northern climate:—

It was the winter wild
While the Heaven-born child,
All meanly wrapt, in the rude manger lies;
Nature, in awe, to Him
Hath doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathise.

It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air,
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

Our English Christmas-tide, then, is a season of Interiors—bright and warm often; often, alas! dark and cold: most of them joyous, but many sad with memories. A few of these Interiors are here humbly presented to the readers of the ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS, by joint service of pencil and pen, as an offering appropriate to the happy and holy time.

Here we are among the Children—where we ought all of us to be at Christmas time. Whatever invitations I decline, whatever invitations I accept, at Christmas, I take care of one thing, that where I go, there must be children—children of all ages, from the little fatling, who looks at my hard face out of wondering round eyes, and then, with dimpled, waxen fingers, gravely proceeds, in a roundabout way, to pull off my spectacles—from that little innocent, up through the toddler of three years old, who asks questions you can't answer, and will have a reason for everything—to dawning girlhood of ten, that blushes, and is beginning to feel the womanhood stir strangely in it—and so on, by romping boyhood of twelve, and shy hobbadeyhood, growing too long for the arms of its jacket and the legs of its trousers, even up to the sweet maidenhood of seventeen (fatal to me, an old bachelor)—and there I stop—for as to the "young men" and "young women," all accomplishments and conceit, of them I don't care how little I see at Christmas or

any other time of year. No; take me to the children, and keep me there—and oh, do let me make the acquaintance, in their company, or *Punch in the drawingroom.*

Mr. Punch, I grieve to say, is ceasing to be a mystery. Faith has failed us here as in other religions. I do not think we believe in Punch as we used to do before we knew as much about him behind the scenes as we know now, thanks to London Correspondents and such discoverers. But I have a great deal of ancient veneration; and when, the other day, I was asked by pleasant Mrs. Eyebright to engage Mr. Punch for her Christmas party, I felt a sort of fluttering—such as I remember to have first experienced, some years ago, when I had a five-act play in MS., and was solemnly introduced to the eminent tragedian of the day.

I had the pleasure of introducing Mr. Punch into Mrs. Eyebright's drawingroom, and a most distinguished figure he made. I should hardly have known him from the greengrocer from round the corner, who waits, as he appeared in his black suit and white tie, which looked quite smart and fresh in the lamp-light. He behaved with an easy dignity, which yet seemed in harmony with the humour of his conversation. But he accounted for this by his familiarity with the great.

"This 'ere's a nice party," he remarked to me confidentially, "and refreshments werry liberal; but, bless you, I've performed afore 'arf the Dooks and Markisses in England, I 'ave."

His "pardner" (as the gentleman is called, who converses with Mr. Punch when that individual is not occupied in murdering his friends and disposing of the bodies of his victims, or suffering from illness or remorse) was a grave man, who appeared to treat Punch with much respect, calling him "Mr." scrupulously, or addressing him, as Boswell addressed Dr. Johnson, with the addition of "Sir." He was much looked up to by the children; but some of them were puzzled at the difference of size between the two interlocutors of the dialogue. And when little Mary Eyebright had been solemnly taken up by funny Mr. Edkins (who seemed to be on almost as free and easy terms with Mr. Punch as the pardner himself), to be introduced to Mr. Punch, and to offer him a piece of cake, which he accepted with a profusion of bows over the front of his box (like a dramatic author on a first night), saying, "Th—h—ank you, Miss—err—r—w—ee—t," Mary was looked upon as a heroine by her little companions for the rest of the evening, and conducted herself accordingly, with a great increase of dignity. It was very painful to see Mr. Twinge, Q.C. (he is Mrs. Eyebright's uncle, and has thus acquired a right to bore us at all the family parties, labouring to undermine the children's faith by explaining to them that Mr. Punch does not really kill his wife and child and Shallalala, and is not really carried off by the Devil in the fifth act.

Confound him, why couldn't he let them believe it all, as I saw they did, the little darlings, all but Master Clutterbuck, who is a boy of a rationalistic turn of mind, and could not be kept from peeping through the curtain, and declaring contemptuously "they were not alive, and were taken out of a box." They were charmingly perplexed between Mr. Punch's humour and murderous propensities—just as one is in judging of a real man. For that is the great point in Punch, which makes the conception of him a work of genius (as unctuous old Mr. Easy explained with immense relish to jolly old Mrs. Roley during the performance, which they enjoyed as much as any of the children). "That's it, ma'am. You see, he's a confounded rogue and vagabond; but he's so pleasant with it all, one can't help liking him: rogues almost always are pleasant people. And then, as for his murdering his wife and child, and singing while he arranges them in the coffin, it's human nature, Mrs. Roley; we are all made so more or less. We jolly dogs, very pleasant fellows, are deuced disagreeable to live with; and Mr. Punch is uncommonly popular in society, from which he retires, not unfrequently, to beat poor Judy."

Before the last act, I was mysteriously beckoned by the "pardner" to the side of the box. He and Mr. Punch, inside (technically called the "swatchel cove," from the swatchel, a little instrument of tin, through which Mr. Punch speaks), were in grave debate. "Will they stand him, d'ye think, sir?" asked Mr. Punch.

"Stand him! Whom?"

"Why, the Devil, sir, and the comic carrying-off business arter all! We does it, nows and thens, sir, with the nobility; but most times we leaves it out in the droring-room version. Ax the lady, sir. Do 'ave it, if you can, sir; I don't feel to do it right without him."

I answered for Mrs. Eyebright, who is a woman above vulgar prejudices, and we had the Devil.

I talked to Mr. Punch after the performance, on the subject of the omission, and found his reasoning against a Bowdlerised version of his tragedy very sound and logical.

"They don't consider it's a regular play, sir," he said, "and angs to-gether one part on it with another. 'Ow would they like if Macready or Charles Kean was to tip 'em 'Amlet,' or 'Richard the Third,' or such like, with never no fifth hact? It aint likely, sir; and it's enough to pison the children's minds, it is, if they sees Mr. Punch come off



"THERE IS NO DECEPTION, LADIES."—DRAWN BY LEECH.

easy and quiet after such conduct, and no moral retribution, which is the Devil, in course; and so I tell 'em when they say it's low, with I own it is low, and can't be otherwise; but still it's wot Punch 'as been and arned, and it's wot he ought to get, in my opinion, and I've worked him these five-and-twenty years, and ought to know. I can't abear to leave it out, sir, and that's the fact; but we can't go agin the public taste, you know, sir, as all us performers finds out—me, and the Operas, and theatres, and Hastley's, and all on us. 'Owsumever, you stood up for the Devil, sir, to-night; and we've 'ad it right out, as I likes it, and I'm obleeged to you, sir, and 'ere's your 'ealth; 'ere's to-wards you, Jem;" and, with a bow to me, and a nod to his "pardner," he buried his nose in the pewter pot, which the provident kindness of Mrs. Eyebright had set out for him in the back-parlour, where he and his "pardner" had what they called "riglar blow-out," greatly to the amazement of the children, who clustered round the door, and, peeping fearfully in, saw, with much disappointment, that Mr. Punch was *not* in the chair, with Shallabala, Judy, and the rest of the *dramatis personæ* seated round the table.

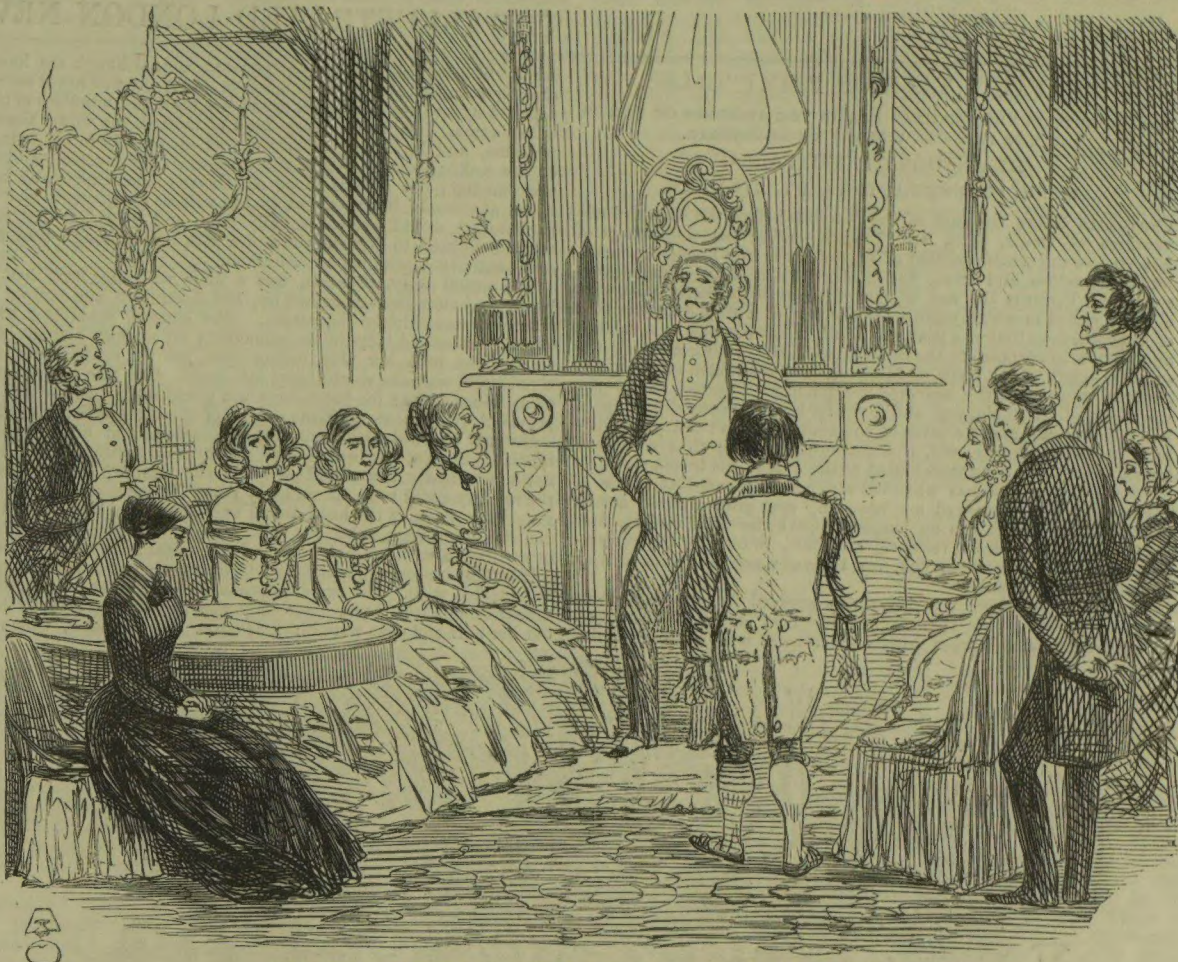
I had bowed Mr. Punch and "pardner" out, and was on my way back to the drawingroom, when I heard a terrific burst, half terror, half laughter, with cries, and rushings to and fro, and giggings and shouts. Opening the door—Oh these children! what miracle will not their happy presence work on the sourest, and most rational and atrabilious of us old folks!—if there was not grave and iconoclastic Mr. Twinge, Q.C., with all his weight of law, and fifty-six years on his head, performing the "Giant," draped in Mr. Eyebright's dressing-gown, surmounted by a wonderful extempore mask, held in his uplifted hands. Yes, there was the severe Twinge, as great a child as any there, exhibited by funny Mr. Edkins as "the Californian Giant, and no deception, ladies"—mopping and mowing and knocking his hat against the chandelier, and breaking his shins over the furniture, and becoming enamoured of the young ladies, and delighting the bold children, and terrifying the timid ones into fits. I couldn't exactly understand the expression of his face when it was all over, and he had bowed his way out, and, undrapping on the landing, caught my eye. He looked as if he was ashamed, and ashamed of his shame, and proud and angry, and pleased and vexed all at the same time. For my own part, I have never thought him half such a bore since.

T. T.

COLD OUT OF DOORS, AND COLD IN-DOORS, OR "TOM SMITHERS'S CHRISTMAS DAY."

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY LEECH.

TOM SMITHERS was a member of the Honourable Society of the Middle



WHERE YOU SHOULD NOT DINE ON CHRISTMAS DAY.—DRAWN BY LEECH.

Temple. We needn't say how it came about, but on Christmas Day, 184—, Tom Smithers found himself with no invitation to dinner, not a rap in his pocket, and not so much as a mutton-chop in the cupboard of the laundress's den, called a pantry, in his four-pair back in Elm-court. People may pooh-pooh my story for its improbability. A student of an inn of court without friends to ask him to a Christmas dinner, without money, without credit? Preposterous!

All I can say is, that it is not only possible, but true; and Tom Smithers told me so, and is living, and has got into practice, and is a leader of his sessions at this day, to corroborate me.

What was to be done? "Confound it!" thought Tom, "there must be some one one knows hanging out on a Christmas Day. Some of 'em *might* have asked me, though. Let's see; there's the —, and the —," and he ran over on his fingers the names of the people he was in the habit of dining with. "I'll be hanged if I don't go and ask the Reddies to ask me."

Resolved and done. Tom dressed, and sallied out of the Temple. It was six o'clock; the Strand was almost deserted; first-floor windows over shops gleamed ruddily; and, as he drew westwards, there was light in drawingrooms; and down on area walls the kitchen firelight danced promisingly, and Tom felt there was dinner in the land for everybody but him. The Reddies lived in — street, — square. There was no light in their kitchen window, and their drawingroom was dark. Tom's heart sank within him.

"They're dining out," sighed Tom. "I can't call at this time of day, and dressed too. The servants would twig I was sponging for a dinner. Can't stand that, either. Let's see; who is there hereabouts I know? Oh, the Tiptons! Yes, there's Fred Tipton has asked me to come a hundred times; and I know they make a rule of having a family party on Christmas Day. They can't refuse to take a poor devil in who has no family to go to."

And, made bold by the very sense of his own homelessness and hopelessness, Tom made the best of his way to the stately portico of the Tiptons. They had crept nearer to the square, and were, in fact, just shouldering it. Their ambition was to be in it—and into it they were

safe to get, sooner or later, for they had set what they called their hearts on it.

There was light enough in the kitchen here, and brilliant was the range of drawingroom windows; and there was a warm glow through the chink of the diningroom shutters, which bespoke wax-lights and plate, and red curtains and fire, and all the other luxuries of the season. Tom's heart yearned to it all; not so much for the warmth, and good fare, and wine, and other creature comforts, as for the sense of cosy family gathering it suggested.

"I will, by Jove!" he said, at last, after a pause to screw his courage to the sticking-place; and rat-tat rat-a-tat-tat went the knocker, and the gorgeous footman opened the door, and in walked Tom, as bold as if he had been an invited guest.

"Mr. Smithers!" roared the gorgeous footman. "Mr. Smithers!" repeated the other gorgeous footman on the first landing. "Mr. Smithers!" firmly and sonorously uttered the gentleman in black, who threw open for him the drawingroom door.

Tom's heart sank within him as his name fell on the blank and dreary circle.

In spite of lustres, and lamps, and mirrors, and curtains, and sofas, and ottomans, and a roaring fire in the grate, and all other appliances of ease and wealth and warmth, there was a cold, icy chill nipped every look, and cramped every movement of every soul in the room.

Mr. Tipton, a magnificent man in a stiff white cravat, advanced in a stately manner, with his eyebrows raised, in a way that expressed distinctly to Tom Smithers, "What the deuce brought you here?" Mrs. Tipton, a thin lady, with a general hungeriness of aspect, reared herself bolter upright, if possible, and repeated Mr. Tipton's look. The poor Miss Tiptons shrank into their shoes, and seemed to grow visibly chillier; and even Tom's friend Fred, who passed for "a devilish good fellow," seemed to have lost all his natural elasticity under the influence of this family vault of a drawingroom. Tom couldn't make his heart up to tell the truth, so he stammered out something about a "late call."

Tom felt he had got into the house where you ought *not* to dine on a Christmas Day—the house where they make a duty of every pleasure, and, among others of these painful duties, duly observe the tradition of a family dinner at Christmas. Not that it isn't a capital custom when the family feeling crowns and inspires the family gathering. But here it was the magnificent Mr. Tipton, whose selfishness was so far narrower than most men's, that it seemed hardly to extend beyond himself to his family; and frozen Mrs. Tipton, who never betrayed, by a spark in her eye, the presence of any warmth whatever in her heart; the poor girls, who, between the father's magnificence and the mother's chilliness, had subsided into dreary social machines; the son, who felt papa, mamma, sisters, and family party "a confounded bore," as he didn't scruple to tell Tom Smithers, when they got five minutes' confidential communication; an elderly aunt, from whom they had expectations, and who, being of the same kidney with themselves, knew that they had them, and was perpetually letting them know that she knew it, to have the pleasure of making them uncomfortable; a deaf uncle, who was a rival for a good place in the will of the rich aunt, and whom it was necessary to ask, lest he should steal a march on the family. Then there were two poor relations, for whom Tom Smithers' heart bled—a poor young girl, and a sort of decayed and mangy-looking man, of indescribable age—one of the men who are always living from one agency to another, who diverge from "a snug little bottle-ale business," into "a fine opening in the coal trade, on commission."

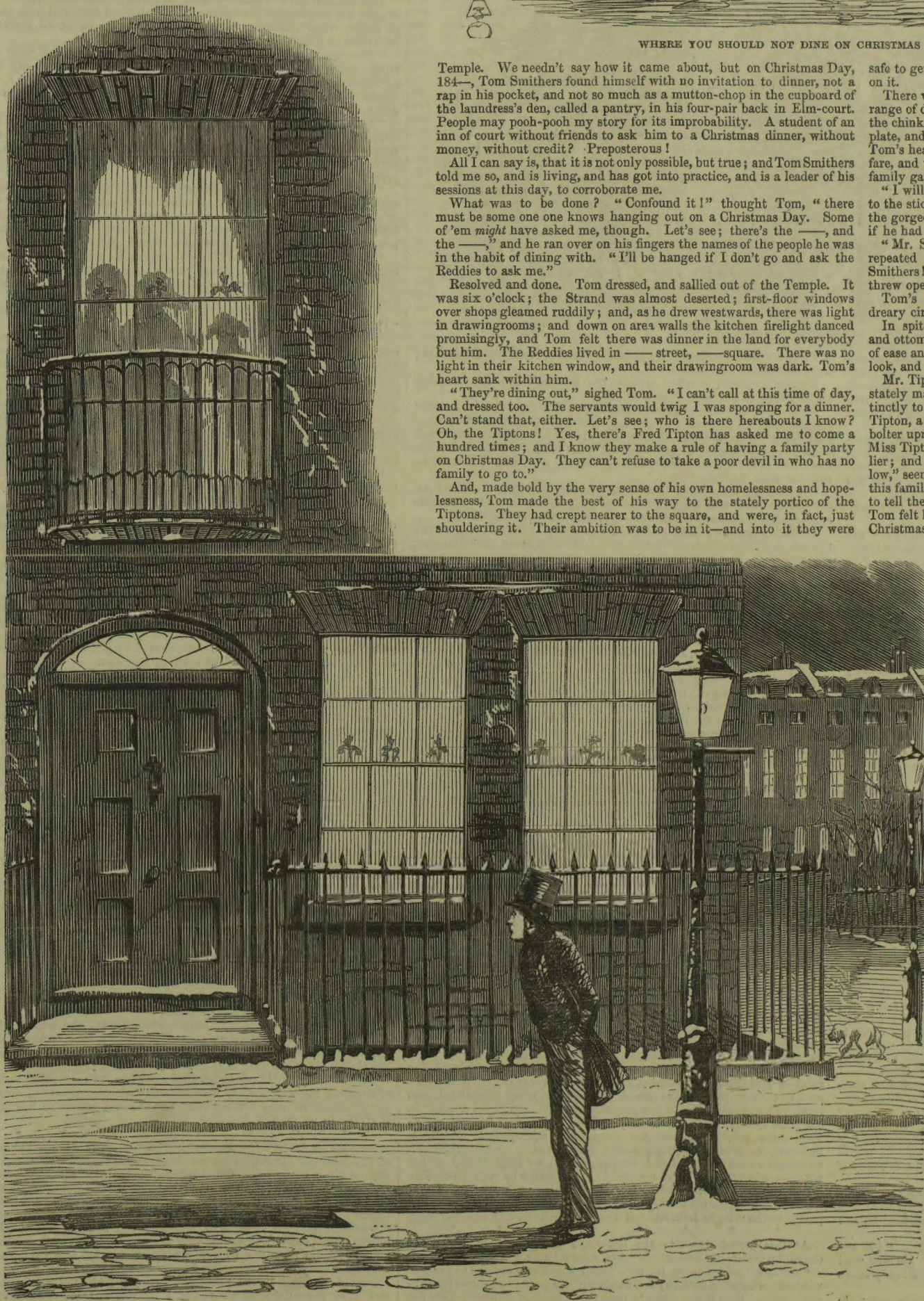
Tom didn't envy their family party, though he heard a good many hints given them while he was there, of "the great pleasure it was to Mr. Tipton to meet them as members of the family," and so on; which they meekly and uncomfortably acknowledged—the poor girl, because suffering had made her meek and uncomplaining; and the mangy man, because Mr. Tipton overpowered him.

There was no move to ask Tom to dinner; and he felt grateful for it before he had been ten minutes there. He tried to converse, to sentimentalise, to argue, to rattle—it was in vain. Every subject dropped dead as soon as it was started—ideas could not live in that atmosphere—it was too grand and genteel for anything.

At last, driven to desperation, Tom sprang up; and, just as the gentlemanly man in black opened the door to announce "Dinner," Tom made a bolt, and escaped from the numbing, freezing house into the less numbing, freezing cold without, leaving the Tiptons equally scandalised by his unseasonable entrance and abrupt departure.

As he rushes past the Reddies, on his way back to Chambers, he casts up a disconsolate glance at the house—Can it be? There is light in the kitchen—there is light in the drawingroom! Huzza! "They are at home!" And he knew them of old—the best people alive; and their house he knows for a house where reign truth, kindness, and a hearty welcome, without ostentation; and which is warmed by that best of Christmas fires, the warmth of honest and loving hearts: and before the ice of the Tiptons has thawed well off him, Tom Smithers is shaking hands with a bluff and genial host and a bright-eyed and cordial hostess, in the house where you ought to dine on a Christmas Day.

T. T.



THE YOUNG MAN WHO IS ALONE IN LONDON, ON CHRISTMAS DAY.—DRAWN BY LEECH.

THE FAIRY TALE OF FAIRY TALES.

ARRANGED FROM THE ORIGINAL MSS. IN THE ARCHIVES OF FEEFOO,
IN THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY OF ARAGAMETA.

BY ANTHONY B. MONTALBA.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY GILBERT.

CENTURIES before the race of the Nekyes—before the wars and adventures of Osiris, Orus, and Typhon—before the wanderings of Isis—before the transformation of Egypt's gods into beetles, serpents, birds, crocodiles and cows, the ancient Spirit King Tien reigned supreme. Towards the end of one of those mysterious cycles, that closed a period in which years acted the part of a day, centuries that of a month, ages that of a year, the King, in his wisdom, to give high and solemn importance to the celebration of the coming nativity, the eve and vigil of the birth of Mittoras, had assembled all the great and the mighty of the universe around him. Seated in all the splendour of fairy Majesty and divinity, having gracefully accepted the "happy and many returns of the seasons" from the loyal multitude, the Monarch rose, and, after returning thanks, thus addressed his four beauteous daughters seated at the foot of his throne:—

"My children, age has whitened my hair and beard, the cares of government have furrowed my brow, my eyes grow dim, my arm is feeble, and my head can no longer support the weight of my four golden crowns. I have resolved, therefore, to transfer the government of my kingdoms to you, my beloved daughters, that I may henceforth enjoy repose."

Thalatta, the eldest, was invariably arrayed in a garb of green, interwoven with silver threads, and her long down-falling tresses, which were of a sea-green hue, were crowned with a wreath of red

coral. She delighted much in ornaments, and, although she had frequently been told that "pearls betoken tears," she was never seen adorned by a row of fine pearls round her neck, and bracelets of pearls on her arms. She loved every kind of motion, the wilder the more welcome, and during her childhood was incessantly in her swing, or on the rocking-horse. When she grew older her greatest enjoyment was dancing; but in this alone she showed much caprice, for sometimes she would bound about in the wildest excitement, and then her motion would become equally calm and gentle, so that people much delighted to join in the dance with her, although they never could entirely depend upon her humour.

The second sister, Ætheria, was a little whirligig from her very birth, and after she was grown up, her disposition and temper ever remained exceedingly inconstant. She carried, according to the saying, smiles and tears in the same bag; for scarcely had she smiled on any one with her blue loving eyes, ere her countenance would cloud itself, and she would burst into tears. She was equally capricious in her attire: for festal-days and grand occasions, she had been provided with a blue garment woven of the most delicate material, and richly adorned with gems, which, especially at night, sparkled brilliantly. Yet she would often not hear of putting it on; whilst not unfrequently she would early in the morning array herself in the most splendid robe, at mid-day repast be enveloped in a homely gray wrapper, with the hood drawn over her head; then all of a sudden she would fling aside her veil and grey mantle, and appearing in her light blue dress, skip away with her face arrayed in smiles.

Still less, however, was the third princess, whose name was Fiamma, to be trifled with. Her presence produced a sensation of awe, for her favourite hue was black. Not only was her apparel always black, but her hair and eyes were black as coals. But as coals, which now

mirror. As soon as thou shalt pronounce the name of one of these young Sovereigns, her image shall appear in it, and thou hast only to follow that shadow, in order to arrive in her presence. Not less useful to thee will prove this little mantle, which will serve thee for a ship on the ocean, for wings in the air, and will bear thee unscathed through fire and water. But the best preservative I can bestow on thee for thy pilgrimage is the following saying, which I wish thee to engrave indelibly on thy memory. Listen to it with attention:—

If too high thy hopes aspire,
Despised shall be thy low degree;
Think not to find by fiercest fire
The genial warmth that's meet for thee.
The swelling waves, their boundaries flowing o'er,
Lost in the sand, shall fertilise no more;
But Earth, content, and looking to her source,
A child in seeming, be a god in force."

In addition to all this, the father liberally filled his son's purse, and packed in his portmanteau two plates, two goblets, and two dishes, together with a spoon, and knife and fork; in order that he might not be obliged, in obscure inns, to take his meals off inferior table-services; and gave him, withal, much good advice.

Andrea thanked his father with great tenderness, and they took an affectionate and moving leave.

No sooner had Andrea emerged from the mountains to the open plain, than he thought to himself that it was high time to consult his magic mirror. He drew it from its case, wiped it very clean with a bandana, so that not the smallest particle of dust remained on it. Remembering his father's instructions, he breathed in a gentle whisper the name Ætheria, and behold, his breath formed itself into mist, the mist became a cloud, then the heavens represented in the glass gradually grew clear, and the image of the Queen of the Skies, wearing a lustrous crown of stars, appeared to him.

"To behold thee face to face, to cast myself at thy feet," exclaimed the enraptured Andrea, "is now my sole desire;"—and, at that moment, he felt himself borne by his mantle, which expanded around him like an air-balloon, ascending higher and higher after the image, from which he never withdrew his eyes, as it floated before him. He had long left the moon far beneath him when he arrived at the gates of the Heavenly Palace, which flew open at his approach. A temple with twelve columns and seven steps stood before him; he entered, and whilst now the image grew gradually paler, and at length vanished, he beheld seated on a throne of gold, and shrouded by an azure veil, on which glittered actual stars, the fair Ætheria, her head reclining, her arms listlessly hanging by her side, for she was sleeping.

The unusual noise awakened her. Andrea in courteous terms besought her forgiveness for having thus disturbed her, and was about to retire, when Ætheria, who did not appear to be at all startled, beckoned to him to approach.

"The Sun-rose of Ispahan informed me this morning of your arrival, and of your intended courtship," said she; "and if my impatience made the time before you came pass so heavily, that I fell asleep whilst thinking of you, you must not interpret this as an unfavourable omen."

"Since my courtship has already been announced to you, fair Ætheria," said Andrea with modest dignity, "I am spared the embarrassing task of telling you how happy I should esteem myself, to divide with you the cares of government, and share with you the joys of your aerial kingdom."

"You are vastly obliging," scornfully replied the haughty Ætheria; and, as they were about to seat themselves at table, and the service of silver was displayed, said to her guest, "As you have, perhaps, hitherto been only accustomed to dine off earthen vessels, I know not whether you will relish my meal from a silver plate?"

"I am doubtful of it myself," said Andrea, to whom her arrogance appeared insupportable. Taking from his travelling-case his plate of gold, he flung the silver one out of the window, saying, "As at home I only eat of gold, excuse me if I make use of my own service."

Ætheria, without appearing the least discomposed, coolly answered "Pray do as you are accustomed to do."

When, however, he had placed his two golden plates before him, in readiness for eating, the Queen opened the window, and, to the no small astonishment of her guest, brought in a few slices of the moon, and placed them thereon. Andrea found them very well flavoured; but when, on rising from the table, he wished to replace his own plates in the case, he found himself entirely unable to lift up the heavy slices, which had, besides, pressed his plates as flat as a couple of poppy petals. Annoyed at this impertinent jest of the Queen, he yet considered it best to be silent, and put up with the loss as well as he could. His hostess, also, informed him that her chariot was waiting.

"To a pedestrian," said the Queen, "it cannot but be beneficial to take an agreeable drive; only I must request you not to carry your golden plates; they might prove too heavy for the horses." Andrea had scarcely seated himself, before the chariot rolled on with a noise like thunder. The noise was so great that Andrea vainly strove to make the Queen aware that this drive was altogether unpleasant to him, intent as she was on the splendour and pomp of her empire, as she drove by the constellations on her right and left, which inclined themselves reverentially before her as she passed. Orion saluted with his flaming sword; the Great Bear reared himself on his hind-legs like a poodle; the Lion crouched down caressingly like a kitten; the Crab bowed before her with his claws crossed: but all this made but a slight impression on our young friend, who was suffering from a most violent headache caused by the noise of the thunder-car, and the shaking of this rattling carriage.

"To the Milky Way," said the Queen; and the horses immediately took a side direction, and the carriage glided gently and softly, without jolting or thunder, along the smoothest way imaginable.

Andrea took breath, and the Queen inquired whether he now felt any respect for her dignity and splendour?

"How should I not admire your magnificence, which is truly divine, especially when I look down from this elevation!" answered Andrea. As he said this, he thought of his father's words: "If too high thy hopes aspire;" and he had all along secretly resolved to seize the first opportunity that should present itself, to take his leave of the Queen. She, on the contrary, seemed to consider that she was quite sure of him, and, in order to bind him to her still more completely, she drew from her finger a gold ring, in which was set a planet of considerable value.

"Accept," said she, "this ring, in memory of our excursion?"

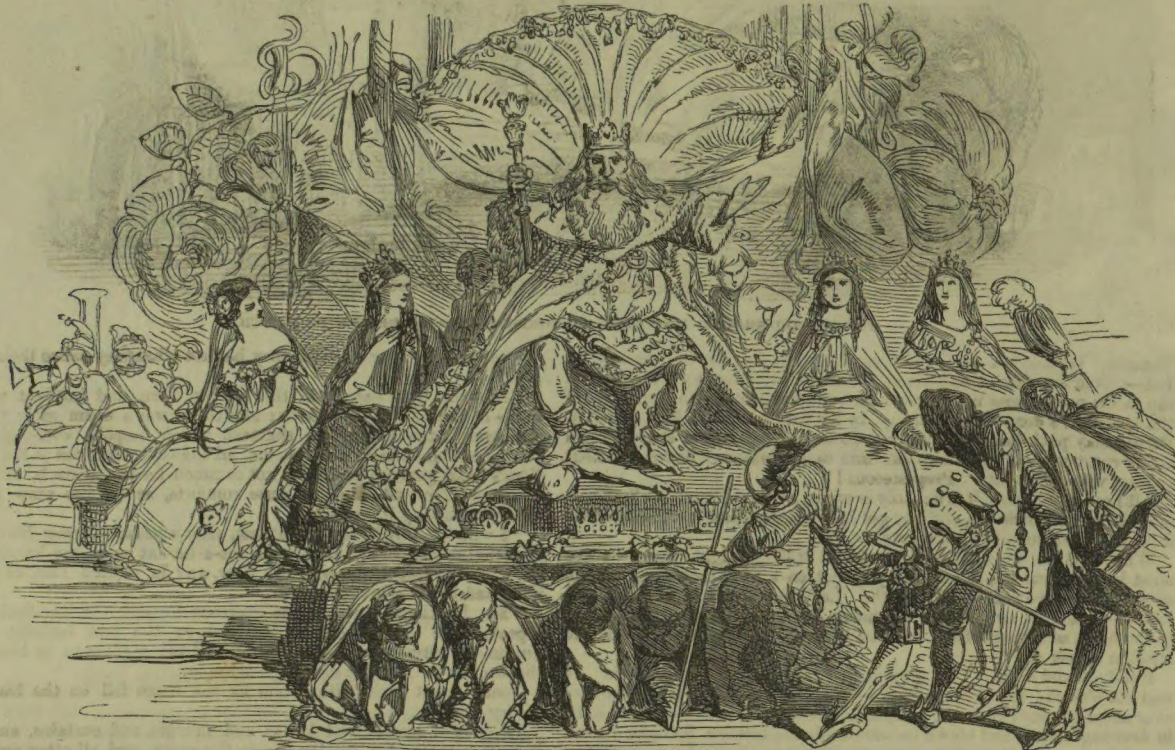
Andrea, however, clearly perceived that affixed to the ring was a very fine chain, which, had he put the ring on his finger, would have held him for ever. Feigning, therefore, to take all possible pains to draw off a very tight glove, he looked about on all sides for some means of slipping away. The Queen at that moment directed his attention to a passing comet, and advised him to draw back his head to avoid being singed. This comet, thought Andrea, comes very opportunely, and as it shot by him he boldly grasped it by the tail, and was carried out of the chariot by it as it pursued its course.

"Farewell, beauteous Queen," cried he; "to catch such birds as I, you must set your snares more cunningly!"

Vainly strove the Queen to urge on her steeds; the wheels of the car turned heavily in the deep ruts of the Milky Way, which the intense heat of the comet had to a considerable degree curdled. Andrea, hanging to the fiery tail, soon vanished from her sight.

Even if Ætheria did not permit her vexation at thus finding her hope of chaining the wanderer to her for ever to become apparent; we may, nevertheless, be very certain that she did not return to her palace that day in the best of humours.

As soon as Andrea felt certain that he was quite beyond the power of the ethereal Queen, he spread his mantle, slipped from the comet, and, in a few hours time, found himself again on the spot whence he had started in the morning. He was right glad to pass the night beneath a palm tree; but so soon as the morning sun awakened him, he began to think of looking after the second Princess. He washed the drowsiness from his eyes in a neighbouring spring, drew forth his mirror, and pronounced the name "Fiamma!" Lightning seemed at once to flash within the mirror, which so dazzled him that he only very gradually could accustom his eyes to gaze on the image that appeared therein. Still he resolutely followed whither the form led; and, after some days, he arrived at a mountain, from the summit of which ascended, at intervals, columns of fire; at the foot of the mountain was a dark cavern. Thither the form beckoned him, and he descended unappalled a flight of rocky steps. At length, after another turn, the cave became more lofty and spacious; he found him-



seem dead and dull as night, and then again revive and glow, so also Fiamma's eyes had the same property, and it was often remarked that they seemed to emit sparks. It was even dangerous to approach too near the train of her robe, for, at the slightest motion imparted to it, flames would dart forth, which consumed with fiery tongues whatever came within their reach.

The fourth of these sisters was, on the contrary, a right gentle and modest maiden. To wreath May flowers in her fair hair, or to trim her little white robe with blue corn-flowers, satisfied her ambition. Violets, were the flowers she loved the best; but these she never plucked, being content to sit beside them with her work.

Such were the four maidens whom the ancient Monarch now summoned around him.

"My daughters," said he, "your dispositions and habits have not been unobserved by me; and I trust that I may be able so to divide my kingdoms, amongst you, that each of my beloved children shall be satisfied with her portion. To thee, Ætheria, I commit the empire of the skies, together with the sun, moon, and stars. Henceforth thou shalt dwell alone beneath my blue pavilion. Be careful in thy dealings with the lightning; and, when thou art desirous to take an airing, avoid, as much as possible, to make use of the thunder phaeton, which is somewhat out of repair. You had better let a couple of hurricanes be put to the cloud chariot; or, if you would have a still more luxurious airing, cause yourself to be borne on the wings of the early dawn, and upon these you may travel as far as you please.

Ætheria gratefully kissed her father's hand, and requested that she might be immediately put in possession of the key of the thunder-chamber; being anxious to examine into the stores, as she proposed to announce her accession by a little tempest.

"And to thee, my dance-loving Thalatta, to thee will I confide the dominion of the ocean. There thou may'st oscillate to thy heart's content, and adorn thee at will with pearl and coral."

"And shall I also have carriages and horses?" enquired Thalatta, with delighted curiosity; "and a numerous establishment, and music, and all else that appertain to a brilliant court?"

"All, my child," replied her father; "thy carriage will be of mother-of-pearl, drawn by eight sea-horses; by thy side dolphins shall disport in the waves, and tritons blow their conches, and thou shalt always be attended by a brilliant escort."

Who was more delighted than Thalatta? She gracefully gathered up her green garment with the tips of her fingers, and made oscillatory movements with her arms and shoulders, as though she were already floating on the waves.

Wrapped in her own thoughts sat Fiamma, the third sister; and seemed as if she felt no interest in the distribution.

"Come nearer, dear Fiamma," cried her father; "I hope to endow thee also as rich as thou can'st possibly desire. My subterranean empire, which no mortal eye has ever beheld, situated in the very centre of the earth, where, on a golden altar, glows the eternal fire, I consign to thee. Fire-breathing dragons shall draw thy golden-wheeled car, and all power over the hidden metals of the earth is committed to thy hands."

Never before had the dark eyes of Fiamma been seen to flash so joyfully. "My gracious King and sire," cried she, "you have gratified my most earnest wish; might it but please you, father, at once to command for me a flash of lightning, whereby I may be transported swift as an arrow to the innermost depth of my fiery empire?"

"Where is my chamberlain, my fire-carrying eagle?" said the old King; "let him immediately prepare a flash of lightning for my daughter Fiamma!"

The eagle shook his plumes, whetted his beak on the footstep of the throne, but remained immovable on his perch.

"Well," repeated the Monarch, "does it not please thee to obey?"

"As soon as my sovereign mistress commands me," replied the eagle, inclining himself respectfully. "My King has abdicated, and I am no longer in his pay."

"Out on thee," wrathfully exclaimed the Monarch. "I'll try whether a thunderbolt can make thee find thy wings." He stretched out his hand for his bunch of keys, but Ætheria had already made off with them, in order to inspect the arsenal.

"Follow her, my dear Fiamma," said he; "request your sister, in my name, to furnish you with a flash of lightning; and I feel sure that she will oblige you."

Fiamma went in search of her sister though she was very unwilling to ask the favour.

"But we are quite forgetting our little Hertha," resumed the father; thou also shalt be a Queen."

Hertha obediently tripped towards the throne, which she ascended step by step, in the manner of a child.

"For thee, my beloved pet," said her father as he stroked her fair smooth locks, "I have only remaining my earthly kingdom, which thou seest lying yonder below. It is so long since I have been there, that I cannot very accurately describe to thee what kind of a place it is; but thou hast ever been moderate in thy desires, and thou wilt now be satisfied with thy inheritance."

"Is that my kingdom?" asked the youthful Hertha; "where I see the gentle lambs and sprightly deer playing by the stream that flows through those flowery meadows? Oh, how delighted I am!"

At that moment a great disturbance was heard in the ante-chamber; the voices of Ætheria and Fiamma were distinctly heard interchanging sharp words. The door was thrown open, and the two sisters were seen struggling for a flash of lightning, of which each grasped one extremity, resolved not to let it go.

"The kingdom of fire belongs to me," cried Fiamma, "and wherever I find flames, they are mine."

"Were it so," replied Ætheria, "all the light of my aerial kingdom would not be safe from your clutches, neither sun, moon, nor stars. It is only subterranean, not heavenly fire that belongs to thee."

"As long as I do not burn my finger," cried Fiamma, still more indignantly, "nothing shall withhold me from playing with your stars, and carrying off, if I think proper, a lapful of them."

So saying, she endeavoured with both hands to break off one of the barbed points from the lightning, which dilated under her fingers, and hissing like a serpent scattered burning sparks around. Hertha, in alarm, retired to the furthest corner; but Thalatta, who had already become familiar with the virtues of her element, seized one of the ethereal silver urns, and discharged such a flood over the lightning and her two contending sisters, that, wrapped in a dense cloud of the hissing vapour, they could no longer see out of their eyes. Their father profited by this confusion to restore peace. Whilst they were rubbing the water from their eyes, he snatched the lightning from them, exclaiming, "It was not that you might war with each other that I divided amongst you my powers and dominions. Not an instant longer shall you remain near me; for I see before me the rapid destruction of all my four kingdoms, if I do not separate you forthwith. My beloved Hertha alone has a gentle nature, and shall be rewarded accordingly."

"I am now become a poor man," said the old King to Hertha; "for your ill-conditioned sisters have carried off my keys and my sceptre, and even my eagle has gone to take a flight."

Hertha looked down with tearful eyes on the lambs as they broued below; and as the clear drops rolled down her cheeks, and the sun's rays shone upon them, they formed themselves into a wonderful bright-coloured arch, which extended from her feet down to the green hills below. "There!" exclaimed her father, "thou hast constructed for thyself a right beautiful bridge, on which thou canst glide down happily. Take my blessing. My best wishes will always be with thee, even if we should never see each other again."

At these words Hertha wept still more, which only rendered the rainbow more and more resplendent; and great was her delight when, on descending from it, the lambs, so far from being frightened and running away, approached her confidently, and continued sniffing at her little basket, until she drew from it some bread of heaven, which they immediately ate from her hand. For her especial favourite, however, she selected a little gazelle, who, as soon as she appeared, went down on his knees before her, and gazed so imploringly at her with tears in his eyes, that she could never resolve to part from him. When Hertha became tired with walking, the gazelle knelt down for her to mount upon his back, and she soon learned to ride him as expertly as the Virgin Laurentia of Tangermünde used to ride her stag.

At this period dwelt in the Himalaya Mountains, in India, the enchanter Fohi; he had an only son, whose name was Andrea.

"Andrea," said Fohi to his son, "thou hast now attained to years of wisdom; wherefore seek thy fortune in foreign parts, and select for thyself a wife. Now it has come to pass that the aged Monarch Tien has divided his four empires amongst the four Princesses, his daughters; and I think, verily, that thou wilt not demand in vain the hand of one of these young Queens. Mark attentively their respective names: they are called Ætheria, Fiamma Thalatta, and Hertha. Take this magic

self at the bottom of the steps, and, in place of the image, he beheld the Queen of the subterranean empire seated on her throne, wearing on her head a crown of flame. He bent reverentially before her, delivered a greeting to her from his father, the potent Fohi; and, although he did not reveal to her the especial object of his coming, Fiamma discovered it at once.

Having found the solitude of the subterranean world somewhat tedious, she rejoiced indeed at the thought of being able to secure for herself an agreeable companion. Less proud than Ætheria, she requested Andrea to seat himself beside her.

He had scarcely taken his place on the throne when several of the flaming domestics presented to him, in glowing goblets, melted gold, of which the Queen partook with much relish. Andrea courteously declined the beverage. Whereupon, music of a very peculiar kind was heard issuing from a side cavern, for the musicians appeared to be neither more nor less than worthy blacksmiths, who struck alternately with their hammers on anvils and bells, which called forth harmony forcibly reminding Andrea of the thunder from which he had escaped so recently. Next appeared, on a kind of stage, the floor of which was a large metallic mirror, two spirits of flame, who danced with the greatest steadiness a very graceful minuet; soon interrupted, however, by the appearance of two armed Titans, who, in unison with the blows of the hammers, struck their shields with their swords, but, at the same time, commenced a fight in good earnest with the two minuet dancers. Not a stroke failed; they cut the flame spirits several times asunder; but, nevertheless, soon had to fight with a dozen flames instead of two, which at length grew so high as to be far above their heads. Wherever any metal was to be found on the accoutrements of the Titans, the flames licked it with their glowing tongues till it melted. Their helmets trickled down in hot drops over their foreheads; their swords, shields, and breast-plates flowed to the earth like liquified butter. The fiery giants or Titans, who had at first presented themselves in glittering armour, now appeared burnt out as skeletons, with naked skulls and whitened joints, and retired clattering from the scene. The music ceased, and the flame spirits danced up to the throne of their Sovereign, who graciously extended her hand to be kissed by them. They thought it was requisite to pay our young friend, who still occupied the place of honour by the Queen, the same respect; and although he declined the compliment in the most courteous manner, they seized his hands, and holding them fast, soon kissed through his gloves, so that the fire burnt him to the very nails; and it was only by waving his mantle that he could at all succeed in keeping off the officious flames. Fortunately, the Queen rose from her seat; on a sign from her the flames hastily retired.

"It begins to grow cool in the grotto," said she; "let us go and see the fireworks, for we shall catch cold here!"

Meantime the dragon car had been prepared; there was no means of avoiding the entertainment; the Queen ascended the car, and Andrea again took his place beside her. The tunnel or subterranean passage through which they drove had a high and vaulted roof, and was illumined by many thousand gas-flames. It terminated in a spacious hall, in which, seated on benches as in an amphitheatre, was assembled the *élite* of the subterranean court. The Queen and her guest again occupied the seats of honour, and the bursting of a volcano was the signal for the commencement of the fireworks. Thunders growled in the abyss, from whence fierce lightnings issued, and Andrea now first perceived that he was in one of those vast chambers the store-house of the infernal material to which the craters of Amateva, Hecla, and Ætna serve as ventilators. First of all a fountain of fire began to play; it rose high in the distance like a crystal column, and in its sparkling crown thousands of golden oranges danced, and were cast forth by it amongst the spectators. Our young friend quickly caught some of them, for having been in his boyhood very expert at playing at ball, not an orange that came within his reach escaped him. The next performance was that of the *jet d'eau*, and, from the loud applause with which it was received, Andrea inferred that it was a favourite entertainment with the subterranean public. From the depth of the abyss arose a tree, the stem and branches of which were of gold, and its leaves were the most beautiful precious stones of all colours, emeralds, sapphires, chrysoprase, and jacinths. Birds of Paradise by thousands sat on the branches; and as they fluttered their wings, the most costly glowing wine streamed up in lofty arches from their beaks. Each of the spectators had come provided with a goblet, and they were so expert in catching the wine-streams that not a drop was wasted. The wine naturally raised the spirits of the company, in some cases even to excess; and when the last entertainment, the game of the air-balloons, commenced, they all rose and approached the rim of the crater, in order to take part in the sport, which consisted of the ascent and descent of two air-balloons, chained to each other, so that as one went up the other went down. This forming a swing, the fun consisted in one keeping the other either so high up as to be chilled by the cold mountain air, or down in the abyss till almost suffocated.

When this diversion had continued for some time, the Queen said, "Will you not enter the balloon, and try a turn with me?"

"I much fear," replied Andrea, "that I am too heavy, and that you would not be able to raise me again from the depth."

"Fear it not," said the Queen; "the reverse is far more likely to occur, for my crown alone outweighs you full ten times!"

This was precisely what Andrea desired. In order to render himself as light as possible, he laid aside his golden apples, and retained about him only his mirror, whilst the Queen, to ensure what she had said, not only took her crown and sceptre with her, but secretly put a little basket-full of the golden apples into the car of the balloon. How did Andrea rejoice, when he perceived that his balloon immediately ascended! The air of heaven blew softly round him, and far on high he beheld the moon floating in the azure distance. He at once decided on his plan, spread out his mantle, and springing from the car, escaped happily through the aperture of the crater from the subterranean empire. The indignant Queen, who, from the rapidity with which she sank into the abyss, at once perceived the trick that had been played upon her, sent a shower of red-hot stones after the fugitive; but he was already beyond her reach. It required much effort to extract the Queen from the depth into which she had sunk, and she then returned highly disconcerted to her dwelling. Both the opera and the play for the ensuing night were countermanded.

In order to cool himself from the very heating diversion he had gone through, Andrea bent his course to the sea-shore, where the sea breezes greatly refreshed and invigorated him.

"I have almost renounced the hope," said he, as he reposed on a rock washed by the spray of the foaming waves, "of finding a Princess in accordance with my desires."

The time, however, passed tediously; and, after he had arranged his toilet, he fell to re-polishing his mirror.

"Well," said he, "there are still two of these fair Princesses remaining, but I will take good care not to invoke either of them. I remember their names perfectly," added he, as he rubbed the last speck off his mirror. "Yes, perfectly; the one is called Thalatta, the other—but what do I behold? Truly there is the Princess already in the mirror, and she beckons me to follow her!"

He felt himself irresistibly drawn down from the rock on which he sat into the waters: gentle billows wafted him still further out into the open sea; and, as the image sank lower and lower, he followed in spite of all his efforts to the contrary. His silken mantle closed, as he plunged lower and lower, over his head, so that he sat within it as in a transparent diving-bell, which he found very agreeable, he being able distinctly to see whatever passed around him. He was very soon followed by a numerous train of lobsters, crabs, and other sportive fish, who were very desirous to find out what strange guest was come to pay them a visit. As soon as he reached the submarine plain on which stood the Palace of the Ocean Queen, the warder of the tower blew his horn, and announced that an illustrious Prince, with a numerous suite approached. Her Majesty sent four of her porpoises in waiting to attend upon him, each of whom wore on his back fin the golden key of office: they were charged to enquire his commands, and to conduct him to her presence. Arrived within the vaulted crystal grot, into which no drop of water could penetrate, Andrea withdrew his mantle, and stood with astonished gaze before the Queen. Neither the splendour of the aerial throne-chamber, nor the wondrous lustre of the subterranean hall, had struck him so forcibly as Thalatta's magic palace. The dome, formed of the purest aquamarine, was supported by crystal columns, round which were en-

twined garlands of coral. Between the columns stood ornamental vases, formed of shells, containing the rarest flowers, which shed around the most delightful fragrance; curiously contrived fountains, whose drops were the finest pearls, played in the softened sunlight which penetrated the depths; and, in a basin lined with mother-of-pearl, swam golden fish, who were not mute, like ordinary ones, but sang, both under and above the surface of the water, melodious songs. "You find me at table," said the Queen, "and I beg you will do me the favour to join me."

Andrea would have politely declined; but the attentive porpoises had already taken his hat from him, placed a chair for him, and, whilst on the one side the finest oysters were presented to him, on the other, foaming champagne was poured into an elegantly wreathed drinking-horn. Andrea scarcely believed the evidence of his palate; until, after several repeated experiments, the Queen said to him,

"You are under no mistake; the wine is genuine and good, and was only very lately brought me as a tribute from France; for you must know that all lands pay me tribute; and, in my store-house, there is abundance of all the treasures of the air, the earth, and the subterranean world. My High Steward understands his duty well; and neither the silver laden flotillas of America, nor the gold from California, nor the tea and coffee freighted vessels from India and Africa, escape his vigilance. Sometimes he thrusts beneath them a rocky reef, at others he causes them to run ashore on the sand, and whatever goes to the bottom is our prize. My dolphins are besides decidedly partial to the human species particularly to poets and musicians; one of them has very lately obtained the medal for having carried a celebrated vocalist, Signor Orion, whom the treacherous mariners had plundered and thrown into the sea, safe to land."

Neither was there any want of fruit; oranges, pines, and the sweetest grapes were placed on the table. When the repast was over, the Queen proposed an airing.

"You have only to command," said she, "to what clime we shall bend our course. If you are inclined to hear tidings from home, we will proceed to the Indian Ocean, where the Ganges flows into my dominions; or, should you prefer the latest news from Africa, we will hasten to that part of the coast where the Nile by its seven mouths imparts to me its communications. The Orinoko and the Mississippi bring me the latest gazettes from America, as do also the Danube and the Rhine those of Europe, so that I am constantly in the closest communication with all parts of the world. And only consider what an overflow! all flows towards my empire, whilst not even the smallest rivulet flows back from me towards the land."

"Well," said Andrea, "I should like to make a little excursion to the Ganges, as I may, from the mouth of that river, hear, perhaps, news of my dear father, whose dwelling is situated on its banks."

"The red mussel car, to-day," said the Queen, "with the bay seahorses!"

Anon, a great splashing was heard in the waves. The Court porpoises were again very attentive: they brought to the Queen a very richly carved fan; whilst her pages—four small sea-dogs—bore her train, and took care, as she ascended the car, that no part of it was caught between the doors.

One of the most unpleasant sensations that Andrea ever remembered to have felt, was when the Queen presented her arm to him, which, although it was of dazzling whiteness, and full and round, felt to him cold and damp, as though he were touching a frog. Never in his life had he so missed his gloves as on this occasion.

Twelve Tritons blowing their conches rode in advance, and a train of nereids, singing in chorus, accompanied the chariot. No wonder, then, that they found the labourers, who heard the noise long before the procession approached them, in full activity. The superintendent of the works was Admiral Whale, and the chief of the shipwrights was the beaver; and it was really gratifying to see how accurately and smoothly the saw-fish, as ship's carpenter, turned off the planks and boards, which were then pierced by the pholads at the points marked out. Turbots planed down the rough parts with their backs, and some strong sturgeons, provided with sea hammers, understood thoroughly how to put the keel together, and fasten it with nails. In another workshop sea spiders were busy in spinning yarn for sail-cloth, which was afterwards fabricated by mermaids in power-looms. The whole guild of crabs and lobsters was occupied in cutting out the cloth with their double shears; and, in fact, there was not a single subject of the immense empire to whom some task was not assigned.

"I should much like," said the Queen, when they had arrived at the region where the Ganges empties itself into the ocean, "to proceed inland a little, in order to enjoy with my attendants the fine view of those distant mountains."

The sea-dogs in waiting and the dolphin chamberlains at this proposition looked somewhat seriously at their fish tails, but ill calculated for parties of pleasure by land, whilst they assured their mistress that they would hasten forward without delay, to gain information.

"We will leave that to our friend," said Thalatta; and a shell boat was immediately prepared for him, which he entered in order to row up the stream. The Queen and her suite had thoughtlessly ventured too near the shore, forgetting that the sea is in the habit of breathing twice a day, on which occasion it first retires from the land, and then again flows up. Just at that moment the sea had drawn the deep inspiration which produces what we call the ebb, and the Queen beheld herself and all her suite left upon the sand. In vain did she stimulate the sea-horses with her golden whip, the wheels of the car sank deeper and deeper in the slime, and neither sea-dogs nor sea-lions were in condition to give assistance. They floundered clumsily about in the soft soil, and the conches of the advanced guard of Tritons had become so filled with sand that not a single clear tone could be extracted from them. Our friend Andrea did not let this favourable opportunity for escape pass without availing himself of it. He found no difficulty in reaching the river by the aid of his flat boat. He rowed rapidly on towards the tall reeds, and soon found a convenient spot where he could land. The Sea-Queen in vain made signals to him, moving her green veil, and beckoning him to fly to her assistance. He was lost to her for ever.

The captured Court had sat for a considerable time upon the sand, when the sea again respired, and a high tide took place. "There is, indeed, another kind of element, our own flowing sea!" remarked one of the sea-dogs. The whole company uttered joyful cries of "Thalatta! Thalatta!" and all beat with fins and tails the smooth surface of the water to such a degree, that not even a well-pleased audience at a public theatre could ever, by yells, umbrellas, sticks, clapping of hands, have succeeded in making so much noise. The Queen turned her horses homewards, and returned in silence to her Palace.

When he found himself in safety, Andrea's first act was to take out his mirror again, as he thus spoke: "Three times has this treacherous mirror shown me a deceptive image of happiness; I will not be a fourth time betrayed by it. I have a pair of good eyes, which are able to show me the right path, and I think I can rely upon my own heart to guide me." He ascended an eminence bordered on one side by a deep ravine, and threw the mirror backwards over his head into the abyss, without casting a single glance after it. He then cut from a neighbouring tree a stout staff, saying, "Henceforth thou shalt be my guide and companion." He wandered thus for several days by the beautiful banks of the Ganges, where the delicious fruit and milk of the palm-trees supplied him with sustenance, and their broad fan-like branches afforded him shelter. One evening, when he already felt very tired, he heard at a distance the tinkling of a little bell, and soon after distinguished a soft childish voice. He listened, went nearer to the spot, where the voice proceeded, and as he gently put back the bushes with his hand, he saw the most charming child ever beheld by human eyes.

"Come nearer; fear not," cried the lovely maiden; "I am bringing you a cup of milk, and a whole lap-full of flowers and herbs I have just plucked for you."

Andrea was beginning to fancy that this friendly invitation was designed for him, when he saw a tame gazelle approach the child; but which, however, had not so entirely laid aside his natural timidity as at once to put his nose into the dish as a lap-dog would have done. The desire of the gazelle to drink the fresh milk was evident; it drew back its little head with a look half playful, half shy.

"Come, come," repeated the little maid, as she held the dish with great care, in order not to spill the smallest drop; "if you do not drink this very minute, I will give it to the kitten." The kitten, who lay under a bench playing with the loose string by which the gazelle was usually led, hearing this, got up directly, and rubbed herself coaxingly against her little mistress, on which the gazelle then first

found sufficient resolution to drink out of the proffered cup. The kitten still continued to coax and purr, and at last received a part of the milk, whilst a handful of fresh flowers was presented to the gazelle. In order to draw the little maiden's attention, and at the same time to avoid frightening her, Andrea put the branches still further apart, and stepped forward, respectfully saluting her. Far from being alarmed, the child went to meet Andrea, as if she had long known him, offered him her hand and said:

"You are welcome to me, Andrea. At last, then, you are come; I have often seen you already, but hitherto only in dreams."

Andrea, who, so far from being prepared for this cordial and confidential reception, expected that he should have to explain his intrusion and endeavour to tranquillise a terrified child, felt so surprised and embarrassed that he was at a loss for words, as he had never imagined it was possible that the bright and innocent eyes of a child could have so disturbed him; still more was he struck and confused when he perceived that the child, whose hand he retained in his, increased in size, and stood before him in the form of a young woman.

"Do you not know me?" enquired she; I am greatly surprised at that, for I have already been long acquainted with you."

"Yes, truly," cried Andrea, with most entire trust, "thou art Hertha, Queen of the empire of Earth, to whom no magic mirror has led my steps, to whom I had no guide but this staff and my own heart."

"Then you are double welcome to me," said Hertha. "Come with me to my cabin, and although I cannot place a crown and sceptre in your hand, you will yet assuredly find with me calm and quiet enjoyment."

Touched by so much grace and kindness, Andrea followed the fair Hertha, and rejoiced to think that his father's saying—

A child in seeming, but a god in force—

was likely to be realised here.

Those were festal days that followed. The governors of the four provinces, with their vassals and splendid retinues, assembled to swear fealty. From the east came Spring, with the winged band of the genii of the flowers. From the south, Summer approached, with his industrious field labourers, who laid garlands, formed of the ears of corn, at the feet of the youthful pair. Autumn led up from the west the gay company of the grape-gatherers, who brought not only rich bunches of the sweetest grapes, but ornamental pitchers filled to the brim with wine. From the north, however, Father Winter came, and, with his merry attendants, gave the young couple the spectacle of a sledge party; when the bells with which the shaggy coats of the ice-bears were hung, and the cracking of the outriders, who were mounted on rein-deer, made no trifling noise.

Hertha's good fortune could not long remain unknown to the other sisters. The babbling springs which had witnessed the bridal days, gossiped about them to the forest streams, who, in their turn, related what they had heard to the rivers. These had no business so pressing as to give information of the event to the great rivers, who, on their part, could not avoid rushing on, open-mouthed, with their news, and when they reached the sea made such a noise that the Queen of the Ocean quickly heard whither her fugitive had betaken himself. Ætheria received the news still earlier. Some sportive zephyrs, who had wandered to Earth, and were murmuring unobserved amongst the trees under which the happy pair reposed, carried the information to the aerial kingdom; and did not fail, according to the custom of such airy gentry, to add all kinds of facts. Ætheria, without delay, commissioned a flash of lightning to inform her sister Fiamma of the marriage of their youngest sister, and, at the same time, to request that she would play a few tricks on the young pair, who had been so unpolite as not to invite their eldest sister either to the bridal eve or the wedding. Thalatta, also, was persuaded to join in the conspiracy, and was soon ready to perform her part in these spiteful tricks. We all know well enough how matters go when grand folks begin to tease. To play with a lion is very different from caressing a kitten, and the jests of an eagle are something more serious than those of a canary-bird. Thus it was in this instance, and all the more so, inasmuch as a certain portion of disappointment and ill-nature mingled in the sport. As samples of these little jests, we will just mention that Ætheria, one day, when Andrea and Hertha were walking through their green and flourishing corn-fields, and entertaining the most cheering hopes of a rich harvest, suddenly poured down a violent hailstorm, and annihilated the fair promise. Another time, in the month of May, she unexpectedly covered the violets and hawthorns, and the gay tulip-beds, which the spring had enticed forth, with a thick layer of snow, and they were all frozen to death.

Nor were the jests that Fiamma enacted much gentler. At night, when Andrea and Hertha had retired to repose, and were sleeping sweetly, a subterranean clatter was heard, the house rocked, and the earth heaved as if its firm crust were about to burst. Sometimes the Queen would seize the shafts which fixed the mountains in the soil, and shake them with such force that she shook the snow from off their summits, and then dreadful avalanches descended, which buried fruitful valleys. Still more dangerous were the tricks she allowed herself to play with the subterranean fire, on which she permitted the cauldron of melted ore and dross to boil over so frequently, that the scalding broth flowed in full streams through the clefts of the rocks, and destroyed the most beautiful vineyards. Thalatta, also, willingly lent her aid, in company with the other sisters, to torment the faithless Andrea, who had left her unaided to sit on the dry land till the return of the tide. She begged Ætheria to send her a couple of her most spirited hurricanes, to set the ocean in a fluster, and to drive the swelling waves over the land, so as to inundate the dwellings scattered on the shore.

All these tricks, vexatious as they were, did not, however, prevent Hertha and her husband, with the aid of industrious assistance, from soon repairing the damage: the reeds were seen growing up again fresh and green; and, as soon as the tempests and hailstones had passed away, orange gardens were laid out again on more remote eminences, where the waves of the shores could not reach them and Fiamma might shake the earth as much as she pleased, but she was unable to disturb the happiness of the loving pair. Even to this very day, the hostile sisters cannot forget their ancient grudge. —Hark! do you not hear the whistling of the chill December wind? do you not see the icy flakes changing the hue of all around? do you not feel the nipping cold, killing all verdure, and benumbing the weary traveller? Ah! but Summer must come again. And even now, with its gay festivities—its cheerful blaze—its joyful dance—its merry games, its holly and its misletoe, CHRISTMAS IS HERE!



and, as in the times of Tien, on the eve of the birth of Mittoras, all saluted the Spirit King with "a hail, and happy return of the season," so we, on the vigil of the greater Nativity, hail you all with "A merry Christmas and a happy New Year!"

THE SICK GIANT AND THE DOCTOR DWARF.

BY DOUGLAS JERROLD.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WILLIAM HARVEY.

CHAPTER I.



ONCE upon a time—
(How oft the old, old words,
like silver bells, have rung us to
a brief holiday—summoned the
gravest of us to the hearth, to
take from the lips of fable
sweetest truth!)

Once upon a time, there lived
a Giant and a Dwarf.

Far away, away across the sea,
and glowing like a jewel in the
light of heaven, there lay an
island; an island heaped, like
Plenty's lap, with the best boun-
ties of the earth. Trees, fruits,
and flowers, with the freshness,
flavour, and scents of Paradise,
adorned and enriched the spot;
and there was no foul, no hurt-
ful thing, to beset with fear and
danger valley, field, or wood.

This island was inhabited by a race of little people—so little, that the tallest of them would scarcely reach the knee of ordinary men; but their wisdom, their goodness was as the knowledge and virtue of the noblest of mortals. Indeed, it might be said of them, that, in their small anatomies there was no room for evil thoughts; that intelligence and virtue alone possessed them.

When or how these little folk became the lords of the island we know not, and seek not to know. Any way, they were blessed people. Their happy land seemed to lie nearer heaven than does the common earth. They seemed to have a more direct intelligence with nature; or, it may be, that the purity of their hearts and lives made them reader scholars; for truth and wisdom came to them as with the air they drew; and a harmony of thought and action was their daily, household music—constant in their bosoms as the rippling sea, that died in murmurs on the golden beach.

And so these little people lived without grief or envy; and died, as flowers die, without a pang. For many, many generations this felicity had blessed them; when they were doomed to feel the fulness of brotherhood with the rest of mortals, in the fulness of fear.

One morning the sun rose redly and sluggishly: the sullen ball hung heavily in the sky, that was not, as every morning, shot and interwoven with golden glories, but, without ray or fleck of fire, was dim and dead. And the hearts of the little people felt a new pain; and tears, with an unknown bitterness, broke into their eyes. The whole island seemed to grow torpid beneath a spell, of which the terrible sun appeared to the beholders the avenging cause and instrument.

Suddenly, a sunbeam—one only, red as blood—pointed, as with a finger, to a certain place upon the beach; and, without a pause, without a contrary thought, all the little people ran towards the spot, following that finger of Fate.

The islanders suddenly halted in their race. Even as one man, the crowd stopped short; and even as one heart should beat, so beat the hearts of the multitude, at the wonder, the wonder and terror, they looked upon!

For they beheld a rock—a huge red rock—carved in their own shape, but of so vast a size that hundreds of themselves would fail to give its bulk; a mass of rock, in the figure of a man, lying prostrate on the beach.



With what wonder—wonder deepened by a strange fear—the little islanders looked, and peeped, and tried to touch the monster! Its head wore a very wood of hair; and wild tangled bushes were its beard. Its eyes were shut; but then, it was a thing of rock, a senseless mass; therefore what need even of the show of eyes?

It was strange; but the mere presence of that mute, rock monster, seemed on the sudden to cloud the clear thoughts and affright the constant hearts of the little people. Many of them felt and knew, their pure souls leaving them as they looked upon the wonder, and then—they could not break from the charm—they looked the more intently.

"It is plain," said one of the islanders, "plain that this thing has fallen from the sun; has been dropped upon our island, that as our god we might worship it. The sun sends it us, and the sun's finger of light shews us the divinity. Let us kneel to it and adore it."

Now, although the crowd made no signs of worship, nevertheless they uttered no word of rebuke; they heard the folly, but had no heart to gainsay the foolishness. And still they looked upon the prostrate mass; and there seemed—so were the faces of the beholders darkened—as though a cloud of error rose from that hideous bulk, a cloud that shadowed the brows of men, and for awhile obscured the face of heaven.

"Let us worship and adore it," repeated the first speaker.
"Worship it with fire, and then adore its ashes," cried another; and his voice sang like an arrow through the crowd, so did it smite them.
"Fire and ashes!" was the cry: the better hearts of the multitude

returned to them; and as the shout arose, the brightened sun leapt higher in the heavens.

Instantly, the crowd sought fire. In a few minutes, flaming torches, thick as fire-flies, moved and danced about the mass of rock; then—and for a moment only—scorched it!

With a loud, long roar, like shouts of linked thunder, that tremendous mass leapt to its feet; it clenched its fists—like the huge boles of knotted oaks they looked—and stamped the earth, that shuddered at the shock. Gnashing its teeth, while, like the vexed sea, its features worked with rage, it seemed as though some mountain-peak had, at a word, been thrown up from the bowels of the earth—a clayey mass, possessed by devils.

All the islanders, with frozen hearts, fell back—their torches flying from their hands like anvil-sparks. And still the Giant roared; and towering to his fullest height, he cast a blighting shadow on that lovely island.

How came the Giant there? What fate had flung him, like a stranded sea-monster, on the shore of that beautiful and innocent spot? Why was the happiness of a good and gentle race made the doomed sport of a mountain mass, that seemed human, but had within it no touch of human truth? Indeed, we know not; and, docile reader, seek not you to know.

After a while, the Giant still smarting from the torches, and still rubbing the burns with his hands until he roared the louder, rushed, to cool himself, into the sea.

Oh! how the hearts of the islanders rose with hope! The monster was a monster of the deep, and would return to his old abyss. No. Still the Giant tumbled and wallowed in the sea, like a rudderless hulk; and then, after awhile, he stood upright, and again strode back to the island.

"Bakkuk! Bakkuk!" cried the monster; and it seemed to the islanders that the Giant called his own name. Be this as it may; as "Bakkuk" was the first articulate sound uttered by the creature, so, among the trembling islanders, Bakkuk was the known name of their terror.

How the little folk shuddered as they beheld the Giant stare about him with a growing malice in his looks! Heavily he groaned, and with his clenched hand smote his belly, as though some pain was gnawing there. Could he be hungry? was the shuddering thought that, like a blighting gust, swept strangely through the crowd. Could the Giant be hungry? and if so, what would be the Giant's food?

Again Bakkuk—for that shall be the Giant's name—growled and roared, and with his doubled hand struck himself. Poor, empty comfort! To unreasoning giants, knocks will not go down for flesh.

A dreadful grin pulled out the features of the Giant as he strode towards a clump of cocoa trees. In a moment he had gathered the fruit; with a thought had torn away the husk, and was grinding the kernels with his teeth.

A ray of comfort dawned upon the islanders as they lay scattered and hidden around. "The Giant eats fruit; he is not a cruel monster; he shall live upon yams, and have green sugar-cane. Bakkuk may be made serviceable and neighbourly. The Giant is, without doubt, a tender and a bloodless Giant."

These were the thoughts creeping through the hearts of the crowd. Poor souls! they lived upon fruits and pulse; they never bought a meal with a life. But Bakkuk was of very different stomach. What food supplied his baby dinners, who fed him, and how the morsels were minced and sauced to make them savoury to his infant palate, we must be content to leave in the realm of riddle. But it is plain that Bakkuk will in no way content himself with fruits or corn, whilst islanders—whom he is hereafter to discover—shall abound. There is a look of uneasy contempt in the Giant—moreover a hungry glance as of an appetite falsely provoked—as he throws away the husks and shells; the enquiring look of a man who asks of himself, "What next?" We shall see.

CHAPTER II.



INSTINCTIVELY the Dwarf people, made anxious by the hungry looks of the Giant—for, in their innocence, they had the like terror of Bakkuk, that small singing-birds have of hawks—withdraw themselves among the thickets and bushes, that they might, by many opening narrow ways, reach a plain in the centre of the island. Here they would meet in general council, to consider means of defence and deliverance. And here, as the sun shone in the midst of the heavens, that wore their wonted brightness and serenity, here all the people, their homes left empty, were gathered together.

"Zim! Zim!" cried the multitude, as from one throat;
"Zim!"

Immediately, a dwarf, with some forty years, light as a crown of flowers, upon his brow, arose and prepared to address himself to the people. Ere, however, he could speak, there arose shouts of "Death to the Monster!"

"Long life to the Giant!" was the only answer of Zim, the dwarf. A low long buzz of discontent ran through the crowd; nevertheless, no one thought to speak against the authority of that wise Dwarf—that good, benevolent little one, whose wisdom and whose virtue made the wonder and the reverence of the island. For Zim knew all things; and knowing them, was the gentler for the knowledge. When only an hour old—so ran the story—Zim had been carried from his mother's bosom by a fairy; carried to some distant place to learn all things even in his babyhood, his mother sleeping the while—years passing with her even as balmy minutes. That Zim might know the beginning of all things, he was conveyed into an egg, so said certain folks of the island; but this story was derided by others, who received it only as a fancy, the fantastic shadow of some mysterious truth.

"By the egg of Zim!" was, nevertheless, the most solemn form of speech to all the islanders. And so let it pass that the baby Zim, an hour old, was nourished in the egg of an ostrich; that, whilst so nourished, the baby learned the beginning and progress of all natural causes; that, after a time, the infant dwelt in that ostrich shell. There were those of the islanders who had pictures of the egg, with its little wicket gate, and its one long window, the sun passing through it in golden rain. But these stories are given even as parts of a Christmas feast—at the will of the guests to be swallowed or refused.

Any way, Zim was revered by all the island folk; and to him, in their present peril, they looked for succour against the monster cast among them.

"Speak!" said Zim, having waited until the murmur was hushed; "speak!" and the good Dwarf smiled. "If you will the Giant's death, how shall I kill him?"

"Shiver him like wind-swept dust."

"Strike him dead as a stone."

"Watch him where he lies down to sleep, and then, with a flash, toss him to the clouds."

Such were the destroying words of divers councillors; for they knew that Zim, with even a wire's point, could work what force he would; he had so many times shown the island folks his mysterious mastery.

"Shall we not first learn," asked Zim, "whether the Giant be nothing but evil?"

"It is learnt—learnt in his looks," was the answer.

"But, granting the monster to be wicked, though not all wickedness, may we not find some good, and make it further grow in him?" inquired Zim.

"Find wild honey in the sea sand!" was the reproach.

"Well, then," answered Zim, "the Giant must die."

"Hurrah! The good Zim! the great Zim!" shouted all the island folk.

"When," continued Zim, "the Giant shall be proved all bad, all worthless. The shell shall be shivered to atoms, if it be known there is not even a seed pearl within it. For my part, I am content to run every risk."

"Ha! ha!" laughed an old dwarf; and then he frowned, and again he chuckled, sneeringly, "Yes, mighty Zim, 'tis well for you—you are safe. Not a thousand giants, and you would hinder them, could enter

your house: let them lay their little finger on your latch, and they are struck down as by a stone from heaven. With a thought, too, you can leap into your tulip-boat; and that air-bubble—haven't we seen it float and glitter in the sky?—lifts it to the sun. Well enough for you," repeated the aged scoffer; "but we have no tulip-boats, no air-bubbles to fly away with us."

At this moment the whole island echoed with the large laughter of the Giant. The island people groaned; and then, grinding their teeth muttered, "Death to the monster!"

And Zim, with a yet brighter smile and blither voice, cried, "Live the Giant!"

Again the horrid roar of Bakkuk seemed to rend the island; and the women screamed and trembled, and hugged their little ones closer to their breasts.



"There's hope in laughter," said Zim. "I have a mind to see what pleases the monster. Who will attend me? The sight may be worth the journey. Who?" There was a pause, and each looked in each other's face; a pause, and no answer. "It matters not," said Zim, "I'll go alone; and in good season bring you tidings of the Giant."

And as Zim turned to go on his way, all the crowd looked the lighter, and all shouted, "The good Zim! the great Zim! By the mighty Egg, the magnificent Zim!"

For two days and two nights, Zim, unseen, followed the footsteps of the Giant. Still did the Dwarf watch the monster Giant at his meals, as he wildly plucked the bread-fruit, and biting and then snarling at it, flung it away. Then the Giant would throw himself upon the earth and tangle his nails in the underwood, and tear it up, and drag it through his teeth, as though he had a dim sense that some strange, some wild enjoyment might be torn from it. And then the monster would stretch himself at length, and with his blood-rimmed eyes flash hatred to the sun.

On the third morning, the Giant, urged by some headlong will, strode towards that part of the island where rose the houses and temples of the dwarf-people. Still Zim followed the steps of the monster. As the Giant looked down upon the roofs, there gleamed in his eyes a strange, half-witted glance. Gabbling, he passed on until he towered over the house of Zim, which, unseen by Bakkuk, the mighty little Dwarf entered. Now, this house stood upon a small eminence, alone, and at some distance from all other habitations. Cunningly, curiously did Bakkuk pry down upon the abode of the wizard Dwarf; then, jabbering, the Giant dropt upon his knees, and peeped about the dwelling as a baboon would look into a twisted shell. Then Bakkuk laid his hand upon a little piece of metal, no thicker than a rush, and with the act the Giant was flung to the earth in a twisted heap, roaring like a volcano. And many of the island folk who had left the crowd upon the plain, many of them hid in trees and holes around, clapped their hands and shouted; for they acknowledged in the overthrow of the monster the wisdom dwelling in the powers of Zim.

All night the Giant lay insensible, and still Zim turned a deaf ear to the desires of the little people; he would not kill the monster. "Wait awhile, let us see; there may be good in him. Wherefore kill, when, as you see, I can, at a thought, make him powerless?"

The little folk appeared to yield to the reasons of Zim; nevertheless, one among another, they angrily asked, "Wherefore not kill him?"

"Wait awhile," again urged the wise and placid Zim; "wait awhile; the monster's very ignorance shall help to tame him."

The next day, Bakkuk began slowly to move. With many groans he rose from the earth, and with a kind of half-brutish, half-reasoning look, stared and gazed at the house of Zim. A higher sense seemed to be awakening in him.

The monster retraced his way; and turning, passed into the gloom of a forest—a forest never entered by any of the islanders. By common consent it seemed a place to be shunned alike by speech or foot: no man spoke of it—walked in it. Nevertheless Zim, chartered by his cause, tracked the monster, who, like a bound following the scent, went eagerly into the darkness. There was a lurid look of appetite kindled in the Giant's face: he jabbered and gabbled, and his huge chest heaved like a mountainous wave with the storm still dying in it. Then the giant dropped like a stone upon the rank grass and tangled underwood; and, as he tore up all that grew about him, he howled and screamed with terrible delight—howled as a wolf howls and tears at a grave, its paw close upon the dead man's cheek.

The whole frame of the Giant seemed shaken with a horrid joy. His hair was twisted and stirred like waking snakes. Louder and louder he yelled; then broke into snaffling laughter.

Still the monster tears at grass and roots; still digs, digs into the earth, until with hungry fingers, and elbow-deep he sweats in the soil. Suddenly he screams with rapture; screams like a slave of the mine, that, with a diamond, finds his liberty. He snatches his hand from the earth, it grasps a root twisted like an adder; with a shout of joy he buries it in his mouth and grinds it beneath his teeth; and as he drinks the delicious poison of its juice, his eyes glow and sparkle, and his face grows purple as a grape.

CHAPTER III.



READFUL throughout the island was the joyous howling of the monster. From that forbidden forest came cries, and shouts, and horrid laughter, as though a band of fiends were keeping devilish holiday; and then the Giant would break into a sort of chant—then a minute pause, as though wondering at his own music—and then laugh the louder, and chant a wilder and a wilder note.

Crowds of the people had gradually been drawn towards the forest. They listened with wonder as they tried to piece out of the Giant's music some rude meaning. In vain; they only heard the outbreak of a brutal nature, drunk to madness. For still the Giant clawed

and dug in the earth; still did he pluck up root after root; and, still crushing the juice between his teeth, still did he feed his fury, still rising and raging with the drug.

For a day and night the Giant kept his horrid revel. For a day and night Zim refused to listen to the prayers of the multitude, who implored him, at a thought, to destroy the Giant. For they had known the mighty little Dwarf to lift a mountain with a wire; they had seen him with his magic snap an oak like a dry reed; and they knew that in his will was the life of the monster.

"In good time," said Zim; "in good time. You shall see how this evil will become goodness. You shall learn that it is nobler to reform than to destroy. What, now, if this brute mass of power, this Bakkuk, becomes a kind and gentle creature? What if he be tamed even by his own intelligence—his own affections, when duly taught, when duly touched?"

"And what will teach him?" asked the old man, who called the loudest for the Giant's death. "What," he repeated, "will teach him?"

"Suffering," answered Zim.

"Suffering! And if he comes out of the forest, and mad as he is—ay, and madder still, for his rage seems rising like a tempest—if he ravage the whole island!"

"Peace!" said Zim.

At this moment, and as if in mockery of the word, Bakkuk shouted the louder.

"You hear," cried the old man; "and you will not end this terror?"

"But I will end it," said Zim.

"And how—by lightning?" asked another.

"By gentleness," answered the mighty Dwarf; and the people murmured, for they hoped that Zim would, with a spell drawn from heaven, wither up the Giant, as the fire from the cloud crumbles an oak.

And still the Giant roared and laughed. Hark! The earth groans and seems to shrink—the Giant has jumped to his feet; and now, like a whirlwind, he rushes from the forest, his face, his frame, as fiery as the setting sun that, with dropt jaw and foolish heavy eyes, he stares upon. He is become drunk, insanely drunk, with the juice of the roots of the forest; and the islanders see revealed in the Giant the truth of the legend they were born to—that whosoever lost himself in that forest would find madness.

The little people crouch and shrink away, and the Giant, stupified and half-blinded by his drink, sees them not. After a while, the islanders take courage, and with strange curiosity observe the antics of the Giant. Now he staggers and rolls—now tumbles on the earth, and roars laughter as he falls. And now, squat, he tears the grass about him, and brings it to his leaden eyes, and tries to look at blade from blade; and then hideously simpers at his own defeat. The stars come out, and, as they tremble in their light, he winks at them, and grins to see them wink again. And now the red moon climbs the heavens; and, with a purpose in his face, the Giant turns him round, and, swaying to and fro, tries with his hands to raise himself. Gasping and groaning he at length reels upon his feet; and then, with a broken shout, throws forth his arms to tear the moon out of the sky. With a crash he tumbles again to the ground, and with stupid looks gazes in his hand; and, then, beholding the moon, he, howling, knocks his head upon the earth.

"See you not," said Zim to the old man, "see you not there is hope of the monster?"

"Hope! What! to see him jump at the moon? Why, 'tis like a baby!"

"Just so," answered Zim. "Didn't I say there was hope?"

Again the monster rose; again, with a shout, made towards the forest—again entered its shade—again dug and dug for roots; and then broke forth from his lair, and, shrieking and raving, rushed abroad; and none of the islanders—so were they appalled by his new fury—dared to follow him.

"Let him pass," said Zim. "This rage will spend itself. We shall hear of him."

"Hear of him!" said the old man. "Yes, we shall hear too much of him, when he has destroyed the island, destroyed all of us—no, not all; you are safe—you are a match for the monster; therefore, why need you care?"

"Peace, and patience," was the only answer of Zim.

For the whole night, and at intervals throughout the next day, the islanders who remained abroad heard the roarings of the Giant. Then came one of them with disastrous tidings: the monster had destroyed half the town, flinging aside houses with his feet as he would spurn pebbles. The multitude threatened Zim. He should instantly destroy the monster with lightning; if not—

But Zim was calm and passionless. "Houses may be built," said the great Dwarf; "ignorance may be taught; but who can restore the Giant? Patience."

The next night came, and the voice of the Giant was heard in agony; it seemed to pierce the island; and the people who had called for the destruction of the monster, now looked upon one another with mute pity in their faces.

Oh, it was terrible to hear that voice of anguish. It seemed the suffering of a very crowd of men, so loud, so various, so searching was the torture.

"And now," said Zim, "begins the Giant's teaching. Let those who will, follow me to the monster's haunt, even to his very presence."

"What, to be torn to bits?" asked the old doubter. "No; you may go, for, as I've said, you are safe."

Zim, with a smile, prepared to depart, when numbers crowded about him, praying him not to attempt the danger; but Zim, with cheerful looks and hopeful words, smiled on their counsel, saying, "The time for the teacher is come." He then turned upon his way, and was followed by a few.

Pursuing the sound, that, with every footstep, became louder and sharper, as though torn from writhing torture, Zim and his followers reached the entrance of a cave, that now with the groans of the monster echoed with awful misery.



But yesterday there was the power of an army in that huge carcass, and now it lay helpless, almost motionless, as a stone, save that now and then the flesh wrinkled with agony; the giant's chest roared like a roaring crater, and his teeth clashed and clanged together. That monster was bound helpless as a swathed infant in the bonds of pain.

"You see," said Zim, "his fevered body smitten with the night air and night dews."

"Plain," broke in the old doubter, who, even unwillingly, had been drawn thither by his curiosity; "plain; I see the symptoms. Even giants can't stand against rheumatism."

"Even so," replied Zim. "And now begins the Giant's schooling." "Schooling," cried the old man; "the doctor first, I should say, before the schoolmaster."

"They shall both work together," answered Zim; and, entering the cave, he sat down at the end of the Giant's right hand. With a roar, the Giant clutched the Dwarf, and Zim's companions, screaming, fled. It was but for a moment; a spasm of agony shot through the Giant's arm, and the Doctor Dwarf stood on his feet, unbruised, unhurt.

Zim called out to his companions, who made no answer: he then went out of the cave to satisfy them, lest they should go back to the people with a false story of his death. When they saw him come from the cave, they ran to him, and besought him not to persevere in his mad intent: his life would be cast away upon the Giant.

"Kill the monster! kill him!" cried all the people.

"Teach him! teach him!" answered Zim, with a smile; and again he turned to re-enter the cave, and again the people crowded about him, beseeching him.

"The lightning! the lightning!" they said. "No teacher like the lightning. That is the readiest means. Kill the monster where he lies, and let the cave be his burying-place."

"Why that would be the easiest way," said Zim.

"The easiest, and the best," answered the people. "Hurrah, Zim! you'll kill him!"

"I think not," answered the Doctor, with a humorous look. "No, I think I'll teach him."

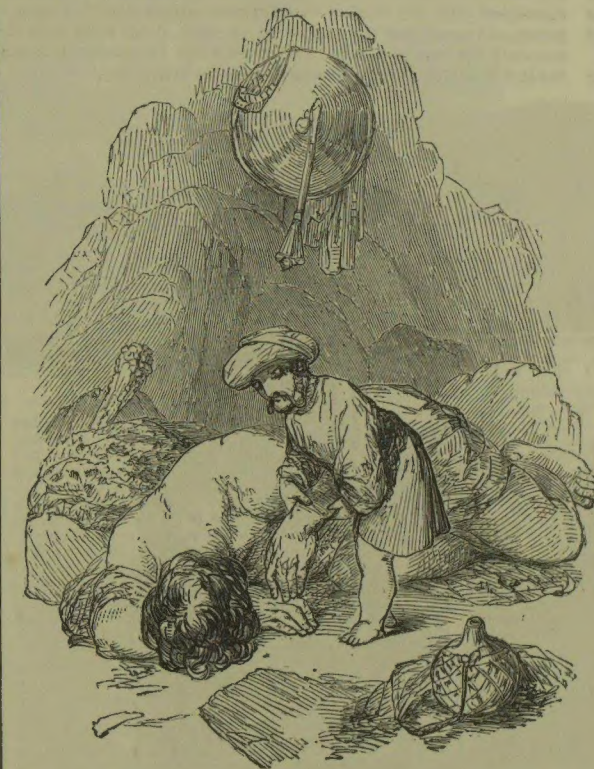
"Teach him! And with what?" asked the old doubter, with a sneer.

"With this, for one thing," said the Doctor Dwarf; and, at the word he plucked a wild flower growing at the mouth of the cave, and then motioning farewell to the people, passed in to his Giant patient.

CHAPTER IV.



the Giant became worn down and passive; and, by degrees, the cannibal fierceness that fired his eye-balls grew dim and was quenched; and, at length, with a dull, filmy glaze, the monster scarcely seemed to note the motions of his benefactor.



Zim's small fingers lay upon the Giant's pulse, that knocked hard and fiery. There lay the huge, pain-stricken heap of flesh, with no more reason to comprehend the agony that tore it than has Etna of the fire within its entrails. There it lay; and there, in the face of that little speck, the Doctor Dwarf, shone the serene might of intelligence—the soft and steady ray of knowledge.

Zim quitted the cave, and taking with him certain of the islanders, who still lingered at a distance without, to assist him in the search, journeyed a short distance to gather herbs. These were plucked and brought in vast heaps to the mouth of the cave; and some were bruised, and the juices strained, and some Zim brought whole to the Giant. With these plants the Doctor covered the burning body of his patient; and, in sooth, it was no light work for one small pair of hands, for, although Zim entreated partnership of aid from his fellows, they all, through fear, refused it—it was, we say, no holiday task for one such dwarf as Zim to cover so huge a frame as the Giant's, from his breast to the soles of his feet. Nevertheless, this Zim after some hours accomplished; and there lay Bakkuk, the Giant, all save his face and head, green as a grassy hill in June, covered, clothed with the medicinal herbs prescribed and administered by the Dwarf Doctor.

And it was beautiful to see—and Zim's heart opened and melted at the sight—the eyes of the Giant. For as the delicious coolness of the herbs allayed the malice of the fever, as their healing beneficence carried health into every pore, quenching the fire of the disease, it was beautiful to see the looks of the Giant; looks that erewhile were lurid and savage as the sun that sets with threat of tempest—looks that now were filled with the soft, mild gladness of a dawning May. Fuller and fuller the light shone in them—shone with new consciousness, with deeper and deeper intelligence. The heart of the Doctor Dwarf leapt within him; and, having filled a large gourd, thrice the size of his own head—so big, so heavy, he staggered with it—filled it to the brim with the juice of herbs, he clambered up the Giant, toiling his weary way until he reached his chest; and there, panting from his labour, there stood the little Doctor, with his medicine under the brow of the giant's chin. How the islanders—for a few of the boldest had, one by one, edged into the cave—how they marvelled at the bold perseverance of Zim; and how, with a scream, they rushed back from the cave, when they beheld the giant drop his jaw, and show his terrible teeth! But Zim was stout of heart, and saw in the Giant's eyes that the Giant had a dawning sense of the further good prepared for him; and, so believing,

accommodated his vast mouth to the puny endeavours of the Doctor. With much trouble, Zim emptied the gourd into the mouth of the Giant, who, with milder looks, and in his only manner, grunted thanks. Again and again did Zim perform his journey up the Giant's frame; again and again drenched his monster patient.

And for three days and nights Zim tended and watched the sick Giant; and for three days and nights beheld the countenance of the monster change from brute ferocity to passive gentleness. On the morning of the fourth day the fever was wholly subdued; and, as the early breeze from the sea blew into the cave, the breast of the Giant seemed labouring with a new emotion; his bosom gently heaved and heaved, as broad and gentle as the distant wave. And then his eyes grew softer and softer, and at length melted into floods of thanksgiving tears.

And Zim knelt beside the Giant—knelt, and himself gave thanks for the precious bounty, the teaching beneficence, of such tears; for he knew that they came from the Giant's heart. Grateful Nature had smitten the stone, and it gush'd forth healing water.

And then the little island folk began to crowd into the den, the news of the change in the Giant having passed from mouth to mouth. And the Giant turned his looks upon them; and his former sullen, rugged face was softened and refined by smiles. And the islanders, wondering at the marvel, uttered prayers and gave praises to Zim. Now, who so great as Zim—the good Zim—the mighty Zim?

And days pass by, and every day brings strength and gentleness to the Giant; and every day takes with it some savage trace, some harsh and angry line. The storm of brutal passions that had darkened the features of Bakkuk was gradually dispelled, and simple goodness dawned throughout. Long and painful was the labour of the Doctor Dwarf, resolved to teach the Giant; who, from signs, grew into the use and knowledge of articulate sounds; and still his outward aspect became softer, gentler, with every acquitted task.

When Bakkuk had sufficiently mastered words whereby to attempt a revelation of his thoughts, Zim sought to know the Giant's history. How came he on the island? Where had he dwelt before? What his condition? And then Bakkuk would press his head with his hands; and, for awhile, pore dreamily upon the ground; then cast disordered looks into the heavens; then throw apart his arms, as though despairingly he would scatter the clouds that darkened him. No; he remembered nothing—nothing distinct. He would smile, and clap his hands at the murmur of the sea. And when Zim made the Giant place his hand to his ear, he listened and listened, and smiles crept over his face; and his eyes softened at the sound; and then he placed the hand to his heart, as though it spoke to that.

But the wonder of Bakkuk—his marvel of marvels—was a little child. He would hold his breath with awe, when Zim brought him his little son, that would stand in the Giant's palm, and laugh up in his huge face, softened into reverence and love. And Bakkuk would compare the child's arm with his own; compare finger with finger; and then laugh, and then look sad; and then new affection for the little one would gleam in the Giant's eyes. Then again and again he would wish to throw himself upon the earth, that he might worship Zim; who ever reproved the Giant, teaching him by his own motion to look into the heavens and pray.

For many months Bakkuk remained in the cave, and was fed by the labour of the islanders, who—so willingly were they guided by the counsels of Zim—cheerfully worked for the savage; nay, sometimes stunted themselves, that Bakkuk might have his mighty fill. And still Zim taught his pupil, every week advancing; taught him the frame of the globe; its bones of rock and stone—its flesh of earth—its outward verdure. So taught him the beautiful mystery of a flower, that the Giant would look upon the simplest bud with all the awe and reverence that the savage brings to the foulest idol; taught him the fabric of the heavens, with the rising and the setting of the sun; taught him to know the stars as they came glittering forth; taught him to know the motion of the moon as she swam into the firmament.

And every lesson, we say, brought its added light, that, from the mind of the Giant, shone in his face, and gave to him the beauty of love and gentleness. And Bakkuk learned to know the wonders about him as only the shadows of a greater wonder—learned to listen to the beating of his heart only as an instrument whose every throb told of a nearer and a nearer world.

CHAPTER V.



word of gratitude—of love. He, who, with brute license, had raged throughout the island, now moved in it as in a temple; his wonder, his



affection raised and wrought upon by every sight and every sound. To him the smallest flower was a precious thing; for he had been taught to see in it a part of the great mystery that shines in the stars; to him the sea-shell gave the self-same music as the unfathomable deep; sweeter, softer, but the same. And with his mind thus taught and dignified, it was beautiful to mark the gentleness with which the Giant

bore himself towards the little people of the island. It seemed that he had lost all sense of his surpassing bulk and strength, in humility and thankfulness towards his benefactors.

After a time, Zim led the Giant to the spot where, in his ignorance, he had thrown down houses and temples. When Bakkuk saw the ruins he blushed; and then begged to be taught, that night and day he might labour to restore them.

"In good time," said Zim, and then led him to the forest.

"It was here," said the Dwarf, "here that you sought the means of madness." And then, to the questions of the Giant, Zim recounted the story of Bakkuk's frenzy.

"Now, then," said the Giant, "let me pay recompense. Give me this place: let me labour here."

"It is an evil place," said Zim; "all men shun it: a place whose shadows are as griefs—whose dews are as misery."

"Give it me," cried the Giant. "You shall teach, and I will work."

"Be it so," said Zim. "I can answer for the people; do what you will."

Next morning, at sunrise, the Giant went forth to work in the forest. Before the sun had set, he had plucked up every tree, piling them in many a heap. Then he set fire to the piles; and for days and days tended the flames, fanning them as they failed, and feeding them with new offerings. At length, that ill-boding forest lay in so much dust upon the earth—the ground scathed and mortified by fire. Great was the rejoicing of the islanders, when they beheld the sun fall upon the earth so late deformed and blotted by that fatal wood.

The Giant's next task was to till the land. That land, redeemed from evil, should be his first offering to his benefactors. Corn should grow there, and his heart would rejoice and melt at the harvest. And so, indeed, it happened. Bakkuk, instructed by Zim, laboured early and late; and—how quick the seasons passed!—many a broad acre was covered with golden corn; corn of larger, fuller growth, than heretofore had flourished in the island. The Giant's harvest-home was, indeed, a holiday, and its memory held in celebration for many an age.

"Better to teach than to kill," said Zim, quietly, to the ancient

doubter; as the Dwarf pointed to the large shocks of wheat sown, reaped, and piled by Bakkuk.

But there was no part of the island that did not bear some mark of the Giant's zeal and gratitude.

"We must have a star-tower," said Zim; "a mighty pile, from whose top we may the better survey the heavens."

And Bakkuk quarried the marble, and carried the blocks; and, with his mighty force, laid stone upon stone, the brain of little Zim teaching and directing him. And when the tower was completed, Zim ascended to the top, taking with him the old sceptic. And as the stars trembled close above their heads, raining down looks of peace and love, the doubter said—"Beautiful, beautiful stars! I could not have thought ye so glorious and so lovely."

And Zim replied, "You owe the knowledge to Bakkuk: without his help, this sight, in the fullness of its magnificence, had been denied you. Brother, I ask again, is it not better to teach than to kill?"

And thus the labours of the Giant filled the island with blessings; and the Giant was blessed in the reward of his labours—in the wages of respect and love he enjoyed of his masters. They had taught him the true dignity of life; and, whilst he ministered to their higher delights, they repaid him with gentleness and affection.

And at length, old, and very old, the Giant could no longer labour. His hair became as snow, and the light died in his eyes; and the old blind Giant was loved and cherished for the bygone days of his strength. He was, in his very helplessness, revered as the monument of departed vigour.

At length Bakkuk, the Giant, died. He died upon a hill, beneath the open sky, feeling, he said, though he saw them not, the stars upon his face.

And where Bakkuk was buried there grew a mighty banyan-tree—a tree in which the fancies of after-generations would see and trace the bones and sinews of the Giant; a tree that would give shelter and food to thousands. And, it is said, never did man seek the hospitality of its shade, or the nourishment of its fruit, that he did not bless the memory of the good Giant, that he did not think with love and tenderness upon the Doctor Dwarf.

BLACK-AND-ALL-BLACK.

A LEGEND OF THE PADEREEN MARE.

RELATED ON A CHRISTMAS EVE, BY AN OLD SENACHIE.

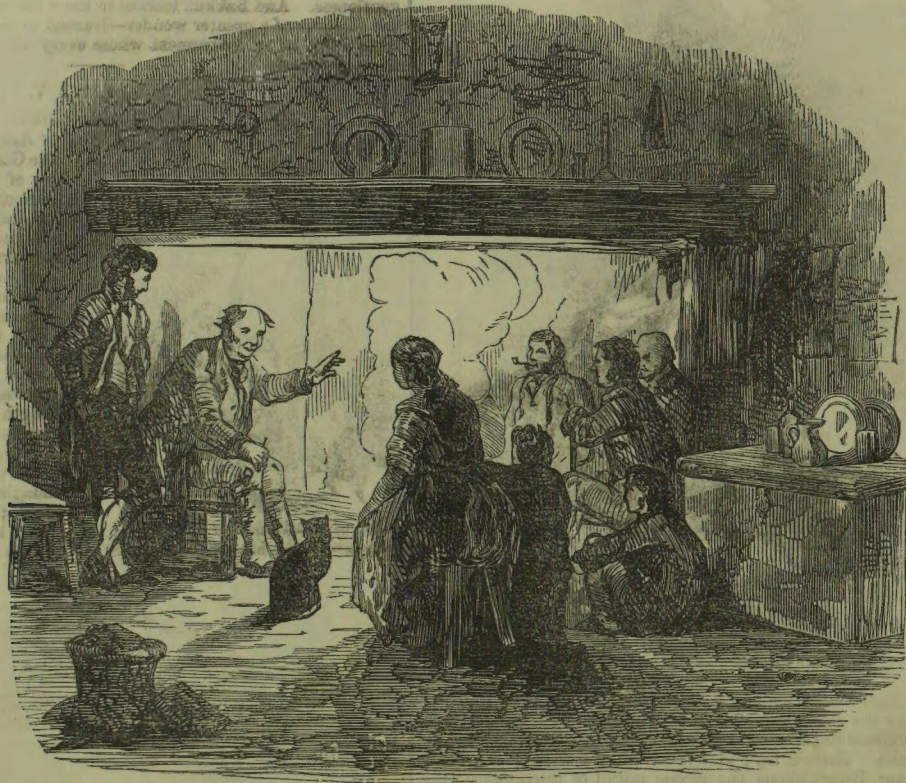
BY W. CARLETON.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY WEIR.

Poor Paddy Phats! I remember the little man like yesterday, and think I see him waddling along, making two parenthetical curves with his broad, flat feet, precisely after the manner of a duck, whose gait of going his very much resembled; and, for this reason, he was never known by any other name than that of "Duck-foot." Poor Paddy was a very worthy little fellow, exceedingly civil, obliging, and good-natured; full of fun and drollery, and a perfect miser in everything relating to truth. He insisted that truth was a commodity much too valuable for general use, and that any man who possessed it ought by all means to keep it to himself, and communicate as little of it, in his conversation and dealings with the world, as possible. "What," he would exclaim, "is tellin' truth to the boys you meet, both man and woman, but throwin' pearls before swine, and settin' them, besides, a bad example?" In accordance with this principle, he economised it to such a notorious degree, that not a single soul of his acquaintance for a moment dreamt of expecting it from him; and whenever any person had related an anecdote, or told a story that set all credibility at defiance, he was gratified by the compliment of being told that that was one of Paddy Phats's.

Paddy, in addition to this parsimonious use of truth, possessed also a snug

and comfortable relish for the good things of this life; and if there was one little delicacy in it which he loved better than another, it was a bit of mutton, in a quiet and unobtrusive way. It is true, he farmed no land, with the exception of a small garden, and kept no sheep; but, notwithstanding his disdain of agriculture and pasturage, he always contrived, somehow, to be able to treat himself—without anything like ostentation, we must admit—to a tidy little joint of mutton. We know that there was a good deal of speculation abroad, as to who the fortunate individual could have been who stood to him in the capacity of butcher. Speculation here, however, as well as in many other affairs of our life, continued woefully at fault, and Paddy's butcher remained anonymous to the last. This, indeed, was the more surprising, inasmuch as we can assure the reader that many earnest antiquarian researches were made for the discovery of that important secret. It was supposed that Paddy must have had some private and inscrutable crypts in his house or garden, the knowledge of which would have possessed much interest to those who were publicly engaged in the science of discovery at the time. We fear, however, that the cause of failure was altogether the fault of these antiquarians themselves; for, whenever they approached Paddy's house and garden, for the purpose of instituting these archaeological investigations, they were foolish enough to dress themselves in the garb of police officers, in order to impress him with a belief that they were sanctioned by Government authority—a fact which induced Paddy to guard his own secret with tenfold caution. And in this he succeeded. Many interesting osteological relics they certainly were fortunate enough to get by digging in his garden, and a good deal of shorn peltry, to which Paddy made them heartily welcome; but, as to the name of the butcher whom he patronised, it remains, like that of Junius, a profound secret down to the present day.



Paddy was also remarkable as a Senachie, or story-teller; and, when not employed in negotiating with his butcher, there could be no pleasanter companion in the chimney-corner nor in a wake-house, of a winter's night. Many a tale and anecdote, seasoned with his own peculiar unction, have we listened to in both places from his lips. It mattered not how great and startling was the fiction which Paddy heard in his intercourse with the world, he was always able at once, by the extraordinary force and prodigality of his invention, to make it appear as nothing. For instance, we remember once to have heard, one winter's evening, at our own happy hearth, a neighbour of ours, and of his also, stating that he recollected his father having in his possession a beautiful walking-stick, made of a stalk of heather! This thumper was received by the company present with shouts of laughter, the only exception being Paddy, who pretended never to doubt any fiction, no matter how extravagant.

"Oh! Tom," said we to Peter Shronyeen, for such was the name of the narrator, "don't think we can swallow that."

"Indeed, then," observed Paddy, "he's tellin' yez nothing but the truth." For be it known that Paddy was liberal enough to support all rivals who opposed him, and generally indorsed their lies in such a manner as to make them perfectly ridiculous. "It's truth," said Paddy; "I seen the stick he talks of. And by the same token, Tom," he added, "you forgot to tell them that your father (God be merciful to him!), whenever he happened to go a long journey, always carried his razor, shaving-box, and a change of linen in the head of it. I mention the linen, because this daicent man wore it very fine in his day, Tom, especially during warm weather" (by which he meant that Peter's father seldom wore any). "Talkin' of heather, however," he proceeded, "brings to my mind a discovery my father made when I was a mere chap. He planted two stalks of heather in our own garden, and in the course of about five and twenty years they were two of as purty trees as you could wish to see. My father—God forgive him, he often did foolish things—was buildin' an inside kiln at the time, and what did he do, but cuts them down in order to make simmer beams of them for the kiln! Simmer beams were two or more arge beams placed over the kiln-pot, and which were traversed in an opposite direction, or, to speak more plainly, crossed by a number of removable

ribs, which again were covered with straw; over which was spread the oats, in order to be dried by the heat of the fire from below. This description of kiln, which has now nearly if not altogether disappeared, has been replaced by that of sheet iron studded with holes; and again he went on: "That reminds me of what I'm goin' to mention. My grandfather (God be good to him!) or my great-grandfather (the heavens be his bed!) once planted a tree in a field of ours when we lived in the town of Sky. Well now, do you know that that tree grew to a great size. However, it took the drap" (i. e. received the rain through a hole in the bark) "just where the branches divided from the trunk, and in the course of time the body inside the bark rotted out of it, and left nothing to keep it up but the bark itself. It was as large a tree now as you'd wish to see. I remember myself, when I was a shot of a boy about eighteen or nineteen, we was breakin' a horse; and whenever there came a wet day I used to ride him inside the tree, and gallop him round, wavin' a long whip about my head all the time, but never could touch the bark. The time our house and outhouses were all burned, we lived in it till they were built again, an' had plenty of stablin' and other room for the cattle."

"And what became of the bark, Paddy?"

"The King hearin' of its great size, sent for it, and got three or four of the purtiest ships that ever crossed salt wather built out of it; and from that day to this, every ship built upon the same plan, in honour of the truth I'm tellin' you, was ordered to be called a *Bark*. That horse, indeed, that I broke in, it was the best horse we ever had, barrin' his twin brother; and they were so well matched, that no one was ever able to say which was the best at anything. The name of the one was Whiskey, and the other Brandy; and sure it was upon them that that fine merry tune was made, that's known by the name of 'Whiskey and Brandy' to this day. Now that I'm spakin' about them, I'll tell you a thing my father did wid them, that he won a trifle of money by. He laid a wager wid a neighbour of his—one Parr a Fleenster—that he would plough more wid the same two horses than the other would with the best three couple he could procure within the bounds of the whole parish. Well, to make a long story short, they met—but I forgot to tell you that the choice of the ground was to be left to my father; and what kind of soil should he pitch upon, but the side of one of the roughest mountains in the whole country. It was all

full of stones and heathery hillocks; and as the season happened to be Midsummer, the horses dashed on at such a rate, and knocked so much fire out o' the stones, that by the time they had been about three-quarters of an hour at work, the whole mountain, which was as dry as powder, became one sheet of flame, and upwards of four hundred acres of it was burned and reclaimed afterwards, and my father got a handsome present from the landlord. Well and good; but that's not all of it. My father on his way home happened to suck down a drap of poteen at a shebeen-house, and his spirits got up in such a way, that by the time he reached the town of Aughnacloy, he took it into his head to propose another wager, that he would turn a furrow up the centre of the street. Now all the world knows that the main street of Aughnacloy is one of the widest and best paved, considerin' the size of the town, in the three kingdoms. Well, at all events, he came in from the Trough side; and when he got as far as Mill-street, he enters the plough, and touches up 'Whiskey and Brandy.'"

Here Paddy feigned a disposition to stop, for the roguish purpose of stimulating curiosity.

"Well, Paddy, and what happened then?"

"Augh!" said Paddy, with assumed indifference, "nothing to talk of. The horses dashed up the street, my father himself, of course, handlin' the plough; and at such a rate they went, and put their shoulders to it in such style, that the pavin' stones, every one of them as large as sixpenny loaves, flew off to the right and to the left, and shivered the windows to pieces on both sides as they went along. When he had got half the length of the street, the townspeople came out on seein' what was the occasion of it, and offered to make him up a sum of money if he'd go no farther. My father, who was as stiff as they were stout, said he should win his wager. They then offered to double the amount of the wager for him, which they did, and on that account he went no farther. The glaziers of Aughnacloy made him a present of a silver snuff-box, and hoped that he'd soon make another wager of the same kind."

"But, Paddy," we asked, "didn't you shoot a great salmon some years ago? Will you tell us about that?"

"No," replied Paddy, gravely, "I shot no great salmon."

"Well, some big fish or other, at any rate."

"I never shot any big fish, but I once did my endeavours to shoot a salmon; and I'll tell you how it came about:—I was out, one day, shootin'; and it so happened that I found myself run short of shot. I was walkin' up the side of the Blackwather, and it was one evenin' in the month of September, and, happenin' to look into the river, I seen what I thought a middlin'-sized fish. It was purty high up near the surface; and it struck me, that if I had any shot in my gun, I might have a chance of it—in regard that I had often before shot middlin' fair fish in size, say about 56 lb. or so. Well, I looked about me, and scratched my head; and what did I spy beside me but a fine thorn-bush, loaded wid beautiful large haws. I'll thry it, thought I; and, as the thought struck me, I pulled down a handful or two, and put them into my gun instead of shot. The salmon remained still in the same place, only a little nearer to the surface of the wather. At all events, I banged at it; but whether I hit it or not, was more than I could say at the time. At any rate, it was about eight or nine years afterwards that I was passin' along the same river, and seein' a beautiful whitethorn tree, wid a blackbird singin' on it, and a fine white churn-staff bleaching in its branches, I thought nothing of the matter, and was passin' on; when, to my great amazement, I found that the thorn tree was coming along wid me; and what made the thing more remarkable, it was goin' against the stream too, as I was myself. Well, you see, I began to feel quare, and think it might be a fairy thorn, when, on lookin' close into the wather, what does I see but an immense fish, havin' a thorn tree in full blossom growin' out of his back! I then remembered the haws, and the shot I had made better than seven years before, and, as it was now near the bank, I jumps upon its back, and, seizin' upon the churn-staff, I broke the skull of it at the first whack. When measured, it was a purty good size, too, about sixteen feet long, and five wide: and little I thought, when I put the charge of haws into it, that ever they'd grow into a thorn tree out of its back. Indeed, that was as curious a shot as ever I made. But what was very odd, too, was that I got a nest of young blackbirds in the tree; and when I reared them, which I did, the devil a thing—God pardon me for swearin'—could keep them out o' the wather; they swam and dived like so many ducks, and no wonder, for, to tell you the truth, every one o' them was webfooted!"

"Well, but Paddy," we would say, "won't you tell us about the race between Black-and-all-Black and the Padereen Mare?"

Paddy, in general, made no reply to this, but took a whiff of the pipe in silence, after which he usually commenced the legend, something in the following manner:—

"There was once a race-horse, and some said it was in consequence of his colour that he was called Black-and-all-Black, whilst others said it was owing to a worse cause than that. Be this as it may, the raven's wing wasn't smoother or blacker than his skin; for you had only to look at it, and you'd see the whole country round you the same as in a lookin'-glass, and that, I suppose, was what made the people say that he had quicksilver in his veins. This 'Black-and-all-Black' was the admiration of every one who ever seen him. It was said he was swifter than the wind, and that he could run on a dead level, as fast as the crow could fly. At all events, one thing was well known on all sides, which was that no horse ever had a chance with him in racin'; and, indeed, when you come to understand everythin', you won't wonder at that."

"Why so, Paddy? what was there so wonderf'ul in that? The horse was souper than any other horse, and that wasn't extraordinary, sure?"

Paddy gave the speaker a look of calm and withering contempt, after which he puffed away the smoke from his dudden and gravely proceeded:—

"You see there was an old squire in the neighbourhood, a member of the Hellfire Club—the Lord guard us! and the same squire was so roguish and wicked, that no one ever made a bargain wid him that wasn't taken in. In spite of all his cheating, however, he was always poor; for, indeed, it's no lie to say that he went along upon the true Irish principle of livin' upon three times his income, for there's no man alive can match an Irishman at that. This squire, whose name was Gunpowder George, drank, and swore, and gambled, kept hunters and hounds, and other cattle that shall be nameless; and the general opinion was that he had a crust of sin upon his sowl a foot thick. That, however, 's neither here nor there. At any rate, one morning he found himself hard pressed for money—fairly run aground, and he took it into his head to sell himself to the devil—the Lord save and guard us from the dirty beast! and, accordingly, the bargain was struck; George signed the agreement wid three draps of his own blood, and everything went on well enough till the old boy began to make enquiries into his character, when he found it was a regular bite, and that George had taken him in as well as he did every one else that had dealings wid him. The old fellow was nettled, you may be sure, to find himself outdone, and thought he'd appeal to George's generosity to let him out of the bargain."

"What temptation came over me," says he to himself, 'to buy such a precious piece of goods at such a price, an article that I was sure of in any case at the long-run.'

"Accordingly, he went to George, and began to spake him as fair as he could. 'George,' says he, 'I'll go down on my two knees to you if you'll only let me out o' this bargain.'

"Are you there?" said George, laughing.

"Troth I am," says the other, "and it's a shamed face I carry in regard to this unfortunate transaction between us. Nobody will place dependence in me for the future when it's known that I am honest than Gunpowder George. My name and character's gone for ever," says he.

"So you are there?" said George again, still laughing.

"I am," said the other; "and a purty figure I cut here."

"And the greater rogue's there," says George; "and it's a proud man I am to think that I have outdone you."

"George had a gun in his hand as he spoke, and just at the moment a beautiful white pigeon flew near where he was standing. He put the gun to his shoulder, covered the bird, and was about to fire, when he checked himself. 'Pass on, poor bird,' says he; 'for once in my life I'll spare the innocent.'

"Satan got black in the face when he heard the words; for you see there was mercy and kindness to the harmless and inoffensive in them."

"George," says he, changing his mind, 'let the bargain stay as it is; it must stand good. I'll perform my part of it; and I'll take care that you shall perform yours.'

"George laid his fore-finger along his nose, gave him a grin, and desired him, as the weather was cold, to go and take air o' the fire."

"Now you see the reason I mention the bargain between these honest creatures is this: it was almost immediately afterwards that Black-and-all-Black made his appearance in that part of the country. There was great mystery about him; nobody knew where he came from; nobody ever saw where he went to; nor could anybody tell what became of him after the race was over: instead o' that, he seemed to vanish like the shadow of an April cloud when the sun suddenly bursts out in the sky. One thing, however, was known; wherever this wonderful horse was, there was Gunpowder George too, although he didn't pretend to be his owner. The sums he won upon him, however, were beyant all count, for no horse had any chance at all wid him. He was as black as night; his jockey, too, was dressed in black; the saddle, bridle, stirrups, and stirrups were all black; and it was said by thousands, that when he was going at full flight the fire was seen to come out of his mouth, and he touched the ground so lightly that the sharpest ear could not hear the sound of his feet."

"Now it so happened, that, at the time I'm spakin' of, there was livin' in the same parish wid Gunpowder George—and this name he got because he was the greatest fire-eater and duellist that ever was in the country, barrin' Fighting Fitzgerald himself, that fought forty-four duels; and, by the same token, no person could become a member of the Hellfire Club that hadn't killed two men in a challenge. Well, there lived, as I was saying, a priest in the same parish wid George, named Father M'Sod, who owned such a racer that never had been beaten any more than Black-and-all-Black. This mare had no name at the time; but, whenever she ran, no doubt she left all those horses that ran against her little chance. She did not appear, however, until some time after Black-and-all-Black had the country to himself; and she was looked upon now as the only animal that had any chance against him. All the kingdom was loud for a trial of speed between them; and, as Gunpowder George met Father M'Sod, one day, he challenged the white mare to a trial wid Black-and-all-Black."

were both going in the same direction, that is, towards Father M'Sod's house when George asked his reverence to let him get a sight of his famous mare. The priest nodded towards the stable, and told the other he might go in if he liked. George, accordingly, went in; but sorra a white mare was there for him, nor anything but the priest's bay back that he always rode to the chapel, as well as to the christenings and stations of the parish. There was an empty stall, to be sure, but never a thing could he see but a white pigeon sittin' upon the top of the rack.

"Father M'Sod," says he, on joinin' his reverence in the house, "this wonderful mare isn't in the stable."

"The priest said nothing, only asked him to take a glass of wine, which the other agreed to, but—oh, *this is truth*—the priest, you see, was in the habit of making the sign of the blessed cross over everything he either et or drank, or gave to another; so, after signin' it over the glass of wine that he handed to the squire, you may judge of his surprise when he saw that if his neighbour was to get a million of money he couldn't bring it to his lips. The squire himself was surprised, and the priest, after looking at him, said, "Unfortunate sinner, I see how it is. If God hasn't said it, you're likely to travel downwards yet. No doubt of it, you'll go to your destination by way of a slope, and you may take my word for it, it won't be an up-hill one. You'll find very little could weather in the country you'll go to; and for that reason, I'd advise you to leave your great-coat and flannels behind you, and to start as light and airy as possible. However, it's too bad that you should leave my house without tasin' something, at any rate; so there's the bottle," says he, pushin' it over to him, "and help yourself."

"The other then helped himself to a glass or two of wine, but had no difficulty in doin' it now, for the sign of the cross had not gone over it, and then came out wid his challenge."

"Come, Father M'Sod," said he, "will you run your mare against Black-and-all-Black? I'll give you twenty to one in hundreds."

"Is Black-and-all-Black your own property?" asked the priest.

"No," says the squire, "but he'll be on the ground at the forthcoming races, and I'll back him against all odds. I'd bet my soul on him."

"Very well," said the priest back to him, "I'll take that bet."

"What do you mean?" asked the squire.

"I mean," replied the other, "that if you wager your soul upon him, I'll take up the wager."

"The squire gave a hearty-like laugh, but still any one might perceive that there was something hollow and dismal in it in spite of all he could do."

"What do you mean?" said he, "I don't understand you."

"I mane," says the priest, "that, if you will wager your soul that Black-and-all-Black will win, I'll take up the wager that the white mare beats him."

"But, said the other, "I'm not free to make the wager, in regard that my soul, such as it is, isn't my own. I'm sold to another gentleman," says he, with a quare wink at the priest, and in a wild strange laugh.

"I'm afraid it was a bad bargain on both sides," says Father M'Sod; "but, as the sun is now shinin' very brightly, if you'll walk out to the stable-yard, I'll tell you whether the bargain is a sure one or not."

"They accordingly went out; and, after taking a turn or two up and down the yard, the priest says to him, "Unfortunate man! where's your shadow?"

"That's more than I can tell," says the other; "but I know I haven't had a shadow for some time past. I'm nothin' now but pure substance. My own opinion is, that it went out to take exercise one day, and give me the slip."

"This, you see," continued Paddy, "was the way the priest took to find out whether he had sold himself to the devil or not, for it's very well known that any one who signs such a bargain is obligated to give his shadow to the purchaser, by way of security."



"When the second bell was rung, the two jockeys went down to the scales to be weighed; Gunpowder George accompanied Black-and-all-Black and his jockey, whilst Father M'Sod attended the mare and hers. The black jockey was exactly the weight—not a scruple either more or less; but it so happened, hat the other was about three ounces light."

"This won't do," said the squire; "three ounces is a great deal in a race like this. I have myself a pair of horses so aquil in speed and bottom, that the weight of the key of the stable is enough to make either of them beat the other. Thank you for nothing, Father M'Sod; make up the weight, sir."

"Father M'Sod put his hand in his pocket, and pulling out his beads, hung them about his jockey's neck, and lo and behold you they just made him the exact weight! The race was to be a four-mile one, the best of three heats. The squire had bet all he was worth in the world upon his favourite, barrin' one estate, and that he wished to keep for a rainy day. At length the two animals came to the start—got the word, and off they flew like the wind. By all accounts Black-and-all-Black's feet scarcely touch'd the ground. There he went coal black far ahead of the mare; and it was thought at first that he would double distance her wide ease."

"Am I doin' it purty?" said the horse to his rider."

"Why, Paddy, said one of his audience, do you mane to say that the horse spoke?"

"To be sure, I mane to say it," replied Paddy; "isn't it well known he did; sure the song tells you that."

"Am I doin' it purty?" asked the horse."

"Beautiful," said the jockey, "and better than that; you're goin' it all to pieces. The fire's in you, my blackbird. It'll be a double distance against her at the least."

"Something's wrong, for all that," replied the horse; "I feel the wind goin' out of me, and you're gettin' heavier and heavier at every stride I make."

"Be Gad, you're beginnin' to fight it shy, sure enough," replied the jockey.

"Move on: by the powders of war she's creepin' up!"

"It's those padereens," said the horse; "they'll be the death and disgrace of me. However, here goes for a rush, at all events."

"More power," said his jockey, as he pushed him on."

"The black racer, however, showed great bottom; he increased his speed, came in a good way first, and the Padereen Mare barely saved her distance."

"The course was now in an uproar. All the backers of Black-and-all-Black were on the high horse wid delight. There was no end to the wagers they made and the odds they offered. The squire betted his last estate, his last acre, the coat on his back, the shoes to his feet, and the hat on his head."

"Come," said he, patting the horse on the neck; "if you don't win this, you leave me a ruined man, with neither soul nor body that I can call my own. Put your right foot foremost, my boy, and tell them you'll see them when you come back, but not till then."

"The friends of the Padereen Mare, on the other hand, weren't a bit cast down. They saw that, although the horse ran away from her at the beginning, she gained upon him at the close, and at any rate saved her distance. His reverence M'Sod had crowds comin' to consult him as to what they should do. His reverence, however, gave them a knowin' wink, and only said "Na bockish." Take all the bets you get." This gave them courage, and the betting was a miracle to see."

"Well, they started for the second heat, and off went Black-and-all-Black as if he had wings; and off went the beautiful Padereen neck for neck beside him. A vauk! There was no runnin' away from her now. It wasn't run she did, but fly. As for the horse, he outdid all his former doin's; but go as he would, there was the darlin' at his side. The day was dark—oh, this is truth!—and what do you think was seen? Why, then, I'll tell yez. As the horse flew along so that your eye could hardly keep up wid him, the people were amazed, astonished, and frightened to see that he left a train of deep red fire behind him, whilst the mare, on the other hand, left behind her a beautiful line of light. Oh, you needn't shake your heads; it's gospel I'm layin' down to yez. If I was a man in the habit of tellin' things that never happened, you might misdoubt me—but you all know that as I said, it's only gospel I dale in."

"At all events, devil a one of the horse but did his best—did wondrous; how-somever there was that against him that he couldn't outdo. On their way back the winnin' post, the mare, to the admiration of all, shot before him wid the ood of a cannon-ball, leaving him hard set to save his distance; but save it he did, and, between ourselves, it was as much as he could do."

"And now may be the course didn't become mad in earnest. That bout was over, and, so far, they were even—the mare beatin' him about the same distance he bet her at first. This was the first time that ever Black-and-all-Black was overcome; and the beautiful mare was kissed and hugged by men, women, and childre, whilst the Protestants showed very long faces, and began to tremble for heir money."

"Come," he went on, "I'll bet five thousand pounds against all you're worth in the world, if you have the spirit."

"To make a long story short, the wager was drawn up on paper, signed by each, and witnessed by Father White's curate, who had just returned from a sick call."

"I suppose your mare has been out takin' her gallop," said the squire; "and, as it's likely she has returned, I'll have a peep into the stable again before I go."

"Do so," said the priest, "and I myself will go with you."

"On entering the stable, sure enough, there she was—a milk-white beauty that the world could not surpass. Not like Black-and-all-Black, her eye was mild and clear; there was a smell from her, too, like that of roses; her skin shone like ivory; and what was most wonderful, when the squire looked into it, he thought he saw one of the most beautiful countries that ever was seen or dreamt of by man. The people, he thought, were walkin' about in some happy land, where there appeared to be neither care nor sorrow, but where all were filled with pleasure and delight. It was covered with lovely groves and meadows, beautiful rivers ran through it, and multitudes of happy beings walkin' along their green banks. Altogether, the sight wrung his heart when he compared it wid the terrible place that was preparin' for himself. On rubbin' his eyes, however, it all vanished, and he saw nothing but the beautiful milk-white mare, as she stood gently and quietly before him. He then looked up to the top of the rack, after the white pigeon, but, whatever had become of it, he saw that it was no longer there."

"In the mane time, the races were comin' on; and it had gone abroad like wildfire over the whole country that the Padereen Mare (for so his reverence had christened her) was to run against Black-and-all-Black, that had beaten and distanced every horse that was ever put against him. Nothing, indeed, could aquil the state the country was in upon the subject. The Protestants all supported Black-and-all-Black, and *see* stuck like glory to the priest and the Padereen Mare. In troth, to tell yez the truth, the race and all the wagers depidin' on it took a religious turn; and it was said, that, if the mare had been a horse, his reverence would have called him 'The Cardinal,' for it appears, by all accounts, that some of the Cardinals have good bottom, and can go over a piece of rough ground with a very light foot, glory be to God! At all events, the bets and wagers were beyant count. All that part of the kingdom was in a blaze about it. The leadin' men on both sides, who were all well up to trap, were as active as lamp-lighters in makin' preparations for the great day that was to decide this wonderful race. The people could not sleep in their beds for it. Ould men raved upon it; young men, when they *did* sleep, dreamt of it instead of dreaming about their sweethearts; and the girls were as bad and as mad on the other side; for, instead of dreaming of their bachelors, as they ought to have done, they dreamt only of the great race between Black-and-all-Black and the Padereen Mare. The very childre cut long wattles for hobby-horses, and ran races against each other in the names of the two celebrated cattle I am talkin' of."

"At last the day came. Such crowds—such thousands upon thousands as flocked to the race-course, were never seen at a race-course before or since. Two or three races went off, but nobody troubled their heads about them."

"Where's Black-and-all-Black? Where's the Padereen Mare?" was the cry in every one's mouth. This race was to come off at two o'clock; and exactly as the hour arrived, the two animals made their appearance, although—and *this is truth*—there wasn't a soul there could tell where either of them came from. Nothing could be more beautiful than the appearance and condition of both. The Black fellow shone to that degree, that you could scarcely think he was substance at all. You imagined you could see through him. On the other hand, the mare was every bit as beautiful, but she was calmer and gentler; and yet not widout a sly cast of eye, that told you she had a kick in her, if provoked."

"Well and good. The third heat began, and off they went; but, if their speed was great before, it was wondrous now. Nothing like it was ever seen or dreamt of. Padereen, the darlin' o' the world, shot before him, and gained on him at every stride. At long last, as they were on their return, she set out at a new pace; and, before he knew where he was, she passed the winnin'-post, leaving him two distances behind—so that she beat him by a double distance, and won this great and extraordinary race. But what was most amazin' was this: the fire that came from Black-and-all-Black in the last heat used to flame out terribly at times, but by degrees it became less and less, and darker and darker, until at last it disappeared altogether, and ended only in smoke, that smelled very strongly of brimstone; whilst the light that the beautiful Padereen left behind her grew larger and larger, and brighter and brighter, until, when she came home to the winning-post, she was surrounded by a brightness so great that the people were hardly able to see her. Now, yez needn't laugh; for if I told yez a word of pure gospel to-night, *this is it*."

"Well, when the Protestants found that their great favourite was *bet*, there was no keepin' them widin bounds. They rushed in crowds to revenge themselves on the horse that had so completely desaved and ruined them. They might as well spare themselves the trouble, however; go where they might, and search where they might, there was no Black-and-all-Black to be found. It seemed as if the earth had swallowed both him and his rider. Ay, and it was the very same case wid the Padereen Mare. When her frinds, that had won such oceans of money by her, strove to get near her, to pat and hug and kiss her as a friend, she too could n't be seen, any more than her jockey. While they were lookin' for her a white pigeon rose from the crowd, and flew away in the direction of the priest's house. Well and good—although it was anything but that for the squire, he, rode homewards, a ruined man, sowl and body. That very night, at midnight—and it was upon a Christmas Eve—the Devil, Lord be about us! was to come for him; and how to act, or what to do, he knew not no more than the man in the moon."

"There is no hope for me," says he; "I see nothing but destruction before me. I may as well despair at once. What an unfortunate doom is mine! I led a life of pleasure, and yet it wasn't pleasure; as what pleasure can any man have that violates the commandments of God, and is an enemy to his kind? Many a happy heart I might have made by my riches; but, instead of that, what did I do but scatter misery, and shame, and sorrow around me?"

"Just as he had spoken the last words, a white pigeon flew towards him and lit upon his right shoulder."

"Don't despair," said the pigeon, "but repent. I know that Satan is to come for you at midnight. On your way home, you must pass the priest's door; call on him, and let him be with you when Satan comes, and you have a chance yet. But if every one should desert you, I won't, provided you repent. You kept back your hand from the defenceless and the innocent, and that's a proof that your heart is not all evil." After saying this, I flew away, and left him to pursue his journey. Well, he did so; he called upon the priest; and, in order to have two strings to his bow, he called also on the parson. He told them both his circumstances, and mentioned especially the visitor he was to have at midnight, and the cause of the visit. The parson was the man he called on first; and havin' mentioned his business, together with his intention of havin' the priest also, that worthy gentleman, who was drinkin' his wine after dinner, said, "I have always been maintainin' a warfare against Satan and his works; but my stronghold against him is the pulpit. To meet him face to face would be—ahem!—to give him aquil terms. I could not think, my friend, of doing that—he is every way unworthy of it. Besides, I have another still more serious objection: you are calling in the aid of that Papist priest. Now, I tell you that, in attempting to save your soul by connecting myself with an idolator, I would run a great risk of losin' my own. Besides, I should miss my pulpit cushion; for you don't know, my friend, how the energetic thumping of a pulpit cushion carries fear and dismay into the spirit of Satan; it makes him, so to speak, put his fingers into his ears. No, my friend, excuse me; not that—ahem!—I fear the comin' to personal encounter with him—hem!—I am not, I trust, a cowardly soldier; but I

"Paddy was quite correct. The victory gained by the famous Padereen Mare over Black-and-all-Black was celebrated in a song which was once very popular in Ireland. In that production, as in Homer, both the horse and the mare were represented, not only as speaking to their respective jockies, but as holding a hot polemical controversy during the race, in which, by the way, the horse was certainly beaten. We may observe that in Ireland the people have a strong and a surprisingly ready tendency to allegorise, and to give any legend at all susceptible of it a polemical hue. We remember being present at a race where a horse called "Dan O'Connell" ran against another named "Peace-maker;" but the people on that occasion did not look upon "Dan" as a mere common horse, but immediately allegorised him into the representative of a principle, an embodiment of their religious and political feelings."

could not, for a moment, think of doing any one thing in common with an idolator."

"Well, now," said the squire, very much down-hearted, "I must see what the priest will do. If he deserts me, I'm a gone man!"

"He found his reverence mixin' a comfortable tumbler of punch; and, after refusin' to either eat or drink—and he was warmly pressed to do both—he was beginnin' to tell him the whole story, when the priest stopped him, and said, "You needn't go on—I know it all. You sould yourself to the Devil. It's a common case. He has a market here that's well attended. Sure, there's not a wealthy prodigate in the country that abuses his wealth, and the gifts that God has given him; that oppresses and casts out the shelterless poor to the open elements of heaven, and laves them there to starve and die—there's not, I say, a prodigate and oppressor of the kind, but has made the same bargain, and is as clearly the Devil's property as you are. Yet, at the same time, I'd as soon not meet him face to face, in regard of an antipathy I have against him; but let me at him from the altar, and if I don't give him pepper, I'm not drinkin' this. Here's to you! and I hope you'll settle your bets before you go."

"The squire thought he'd thry him a little farther; for the truth was, he saw, that, however well disposed both clergymen were to abuse the Devil at a distance, neither of them relished comin' to close grips wid him."

"I'll tell him," said he, "that Dr. Slumberwell will be there, and may be, it will give him courage. If it's any satisfaction to you to know that you will have support," he said, "I can tell you that Dr. Slumberwell will be there to assist you."

"What, sir," replied his Reverence, "do you expect that I'd associate myself with a heretic?"

"Wouldn't you join a heretic in strivin' to save my sowl?" asked the poor squire, who feared that, between two stools, he was likely to come to the ground."

"No, sir," said he; "in doin' so I'd run a risk of losin' my own. Why, then, do you ask me to do what's unreasonable? I'll pray for you, I'll convert you, I'll make a good Catholic of you—only, for Heaven's sake, don't ask me to meet the Devil in the dark."

"God bless me," thought the squire, "these two men would burn one another in the name of God, and yet they are both of the same religion."

"The squire was so completely overcome with all he had gone through that day, that he forgot everythin' that happened to him for the remainder of it. He went to bed, I dare say, to take an hour or two's rest, to strengthen himself for his journey. When he awoke, he saw the white dove sittin' on a chest of drawers at the foot of his bed."

"Did I not see you this evenin'?" said he.

"You did," said the dove.

"May I ask you and what you are?" said the other.

"You may," replied the dove. "My name is Mercy. I was a favourite with your Protestant clergyman until wealth and luxury hardened his heart, and left no place for me in it. I have also abandoned the priest, who now thinks more of the aggrandisement of his Church than he does of the salvation of his flock. I am sadly in want of a place of rest; but, as I said to you before, so I repeat to you again—do not despair, but repent." It then vanished."

"Now, however, came the dreaded hour. A hollow blast of wind moaned through the whole house; the windows shook in their frames; an awful noise, like the sound of heavy carriage-wheels, was heard comin' to the door, where it stopped; then came a solemn knock; the door was opened—the foot was heard moun'tin' the stairs—approachin' the bed-room door—the handle was seized—it was turned, and in walked the Devil, to claim his bargain! He grinned wid sich delight that it would make your blood run cold, and was in the act of stoopin' to take away the squire, body and bones, when the unfortunate man gave a shout and a start—awoke—and, on looking about him, persaved that it was all only a dream—a heavy fit of the nightmare that he had been labourin' under for hours. This was upon Christmas Eve, as I said."

"Well, but Paddy, what became of Black-and-all-Black and the Padereen Mare?"

"No one knows that; neither o' them was ever seen in the country afterwards."

"But what were they at all?"

"Well, I'll tell you that. Black-and-all-Black was the Protestant Church, and the Padereen Mare the Roman Catholic."

"And the squire, Paddy?"

"The squire repented, and became one of the best, the most pious, and the most charitable men that ever was in the country; only that, to the day of his death, he could never bear the sight of a parson that thought more of himself than his religion, or of a priest that thought more of his religion than his flock. Every Christmas he gave a comfortable dinner to a number of poor people; and I hope that every one who hears me, and can afford it, will imitate his example, and show mercy and kindness to those that are friendless and without food."

HUNTING THE WREN.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES MAHONY.

We hunted the Wren for Robbin the Bobbin,

We hunted the Wren for Jack of the Can,

We hunted the Wren for Robbin the Bobbin,

We hunted the Wren for every one.

SUCH is the rude chant of the Manx lads, after having chased the poor Wren, "the most diminutive of birds," on New Year's Day; when the juvenile hunters, unreflectingly following a barbarous custom, have their unfortunate victim borne before them, affixed, with its wings extended, to the top of a long pole. Having made the circuit from house to house, and collected all the money they can, they lay the Wren on a bier, and carry it in procession to the parish churchyard, where, with a whimsical kind of solemnity, they make a grave, bury it, and sing dirges over it in the Manx language, which they call her knell. The obsequies being performed, the company, outside the churchyard wall, form a circle, and dance to music especially provided for the occasion."

A tradition lies at the root of this ceremony. Once on a time, a fairy of uncommon beauty by the sweetness of her voice fascinated the men of the Isle of Man to follow her footsteps, till by degrees she led them into the sea, where they perished. At length, a knight-errant resolved on countervailing the charms of the Syren; but, on attempting the task, and almost in the moment of success, the subtle minx took the form of a Wren, and escaped him. The evil-disposed fairy thus evaded instant destruction; but was, nevertheless, subjected to a spell, by which she was condemned, on every succeeding New Year's Day, to re-animate the same form, with the definitive sentence that she must ultimately perish by human hand."

Elsewhere, Christmas Day and St. Stephen's Day are dedicated to this barbarous hunting. Aubrey, in his "Miscellanies," records that, at the last battle fought in the north of Ireland, between the Protestants and the Papists, in Glinsuly, in the county of Donegal, "near the same place, a party of the Protestants had been surprised, sleeping, by the Popish Irish, were it not for several Wrens, that just awakened them by dancing and pecking on the drums as the enemy were approaching. For this reason the wild Irish mortally hate these birds to this day, calling them the 'Devil's servants,' and killing them wherever they can catch them. They teach their children to thrust them full of thorns; you'll see sometimes, on holidays, a whole parish running like madmen, from hedge to hedge, a *Wren-hunting*."

Alas, poor Wren! of what guilt wert thou the doer, in the state of pre-existence, that thy race should thus have become the victims of a various superstition? For we read, that not only in the Isle of Man and in Ireland, but in France likewise, this little bird is, in like manner, superstitiously sacrificed. Once, however, as its name imports, it had been participant of better fortune. By the Druids it was esteemed the King of Birds, and of the augurs of old it was held to be the favourite. These distinctions, however, were fatal to its continued happiness. The superstitious respect shewn to it gave offence, it is said, "to our first Christian missionaries, and, by their commands, he is still hunted and killed by the peasants on Christmas Day; and on the following (St. Stephen's Day) he is carried about, hung by the leg in the centre of two hoops"—(such is the account given by Colonel Vallancey, in his "Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis")—"crossing each other at right angles; and a procession made in every village, of men, women, and children, singing an Irish catch, importing him to be the King of all Birds."

By some authorities, the antipathy of the Irish to the Wren is connected with the invasion of the Danes, respecting whom a similar tale is told us by Aubrey of the Protestants."

Disputes among the learned have arisen touching the proper day of the Hunt—whether St. Stephen's or Christmas Day? The latter is that on which the Hunt now takes place, whilst the doggerel rhymes anent the custom mention "good St. Stephen's Day" as that of merriment. Young and old join in the sport, as illustrated in the accompanying Sketch."

To the sport, the ceremony of the "Wren-bush" succeeds, whereon, as above stated, the feathered sacrifice is borne in funeral state from door to door. The bush is composed of holly and ivy, which deck, on Christmas Eve, the kitchen, the parlour, and the hall, and from which portions are contributed by rich and poor. "Bedecked with ribbons gay," the royal bird was, of old, borne aloft by selected attendants, and paraded in a processional group as picturesque as it was fantastical—hobby horses, fiery dragons, and rampant serpents, whisking terribly their tails about, having been amongst the accessories of the scene, to the intense enjoyment of the assembled crowd. But of these ancient honours the ceremony is now

"HUNTING THE WREN," AT CHRISTMAS.



ORIGIN OF HUNTING THE WREN.—THE BIRD AWAKING THE DANES.

shorn. It has dwindled down, we are told by a Correspondent, to "a gay affair," but amongst the celebrators may yet be seen examples of the costumes of the last century, such as linger yet among the people. The still unextinguished wit, too, of the peasantry, with the usual incidents of Irish fun, frolic, dancing, and love-making, enliven the occasion.

"I can never forget," says our informant, "a visit from the 'Bush Boys' to the house of a dear relation. Upon making our appearance in the yard, we found such a group! such a clatter!—all seemed to have had but one thought—pure fun and merriment. All, from the crowing cock, the chuckling turkey (whose day had not yet arrived), the squalling pig, the hurraing and unfortunate multitude, up to the dancing squireen with his creaking whip, and the girls and children, created such an uproar as can only be imagined, not described. Meanwhile, the laughter-exciting Drolleen held forth his old stocking to receive the largess, and sang the following ditty:—

The Wren, the Wren,
The King of all birds
St. Stephen's day,
He was caught in the fir,
And, although he is little,
His family's great,
So arise, landlady,
And give us a treat.

And if you fill it
Of the small,
It will not do
For our boys at all;

"The recollection of the cordial welcome with which the 'Wren boys, ay, and girls too,' were greeted in the farmer's yard or at the landlord's porch, where the 'drop just to drown melancholy' was given by the landlady, or some young damsel of the house, with a kindness of spirit that drew around them for the coming year the warm affections of their

But if you fill
It of the best,
We hope n heaven
Your soul may rest!

Oh, Mr. — is a worthy man,
And to his house
We have brought
Our Wren:
Sing holly, sing vy,
Sing ivy, sing holly—
And he'll give us a drop,
Just to drown melancholy.

HUNTING THE WREN AT CHRISTMAS.

dependants, is still dear to many a heart. Of these the great mass of the crowd was constituted, who then and there sincerely offered up the fervent orison for the health and prosperity of the donors."

The office of the Drolleen on these occasions was a post of ambition and required divers qualifications. He must be the wittiest and readiest of the group, quick at repartee, armed at all points; for by the amount of his fun was regulated that of the *largesse*. The receipts were, of course, spent in the evening in a seasonable jollification, not omitting dance and song, and the sparkling eye of the merry colleens who had joined in the day's sport, willing to encourage the boys with an opportunity for "a bit of coortin'." This latter is carried on until Shrovetide, when the willing fair ones learn which of them must visit the bleak and dreary cliffs of Skellig on the old maid's penance, and which may seek the cosy little parlour of Father Tom, with its bright and cheerful fire, its boole and benediction, and its kindly wishes for the future. Many such a merry Christmas! many such a happy New Year!



PROCESSION OF THE WREN BUSH AND WREN BOYS.

A SONG FOR CHRISTMAS.



SMILE, OLD WINTER.

POETRY BY C. MACKAY, LL.D.

A Christmas Ballad.

MUSIC BY BLEWITT,
AUTHOR OF "HOME AND FRIENDS," &c. &c.

Andante moderato. *8^{ve}*

f *pp* *lento* *ped.* *** *f* *a tempo* *lento* *pp*

Said Win - ter, and he strove to frown, "Why do you love me, young and old? The drift - ing

f *a tempo* *p* *f*

snows my fore - head crown, My heart is hard, my blood is cold." "Ah, no!" said both; "we love, we love you

p *a tempo* *p* *accelerando* *piu lento*

well, For fresh de - lights, de - lights re - mem - ber'd long; Your voice is mer - ry, mer - ry as a bell, And all your

f *a tempo*

ac - cents sound like song, And all your ac - cents sound like song.

dolce *f* *colla voce* *pp* *lento* *f*

Sprightly, but not quick.

So smile, old Win - ter, smile a - gain, You but pre - tend our foe to be; You - warm and cheer the hearts of men; We

love you for your jol - li - ty, We love you, love, We love you for your

Repeat in Chorus.

jol - li - ty.

à la Waltz.

Da capo & 2d and 3d Verses.

Said Winter to the maid I love,—
“What makes thee prize me, maiden fair?
I strip the verdure from the grove,
And hush the music of the air.”
Sweet was her smile, as she replied,—
“Oh, Winter wild, though this be true,

SECOND VERSE.

You come with Christmas at your side—
You give affection work to do:
The suffering and the poor you seek,
With kindly words and offerings free,
And dry the tears on sorrow's cheek,—
We love you for your charity.”

THIRD VERSE.

The Summer on their path shall sing,
And Autumn bless them with its store.
So be ye happy on the earth,
Whate'er your name or station be,
Who mingle with your Christmas mirth
Your bounteous Christmas charity.”

•• The words in italics must be repeated in singing.

EDITH THE SWAN-NECKED.

BY MRS. T. K. HERVEY.

[After the Battle of Hastings, the body of King Harold was sought by two monks of Waltham, an abbey which he had founded. Not being able to find the remains of their benefactor, they applied to Edith, surnamed the “Swan-necked,” who had been the mistress of Harold before he came to the throne. She accompanied them to the field, and, with the keen eye of affection, recognised the body of him whom she had loved.—See *Thierry's History of the Conquest.*]

Christmas has its merry tales,
And Christmas has its sad;
But there be some fine sorrows
That make the true heart glad.

Ancient Manuscript.

The battle's rage is past and over;
Silent lies the field of blood:
Save that alone the vultures hover
Where the hearth-defenders stood,
Nought is there of life or motion—
Not a sigh, and scarce a breath;
While slumber, as a slumbering ocean,
The last-born in the Land of Death!

The night-clouds wave like waving palls,
In sweeping folds the banner falls;
With unclosed eye, and lips departed,
Lowly lie the eagle-hearted!
From the white hairs of warriors old
The cloven casque hath backward roll'd,
And many a cheek in youth's first spring
Lies in the night air withering.
As mast and spar on some rude shore
Where angry waves contend no more—
So, scatter'd o'er that lonely field,
Lie the tall spear and shatter'd shield;
And Saxon swords in broken row,
So late returning blow for blow,
Rest powerless by the alien bow!
So late, yet blood hath ceased to flow,
For closed is now the day of woe.
Each light is quench'd, each spirit fled;
Yet o'er those slumberers' darken'd bed
No mass is sunn'd, no prayer is said,
Nor loving hand the dead has spread:
Not yet the kindred tears are shed,
Nor yet the living mourn the dead.

Two monks alone that field are pacing,
Like eager spoilers of the dead;
But oh! not theirs the hands defacing
The slumbering forms around them spread.

They, where her best and bravest met,
Beheld the star of England set;
And while in deep and utter woe
They mourn'd their benefactor low,
Yet only ask'd from 'midst his foes
To bear him to the grave's repose,
And see the earth around him close!

In vain their toil: the field was wide,
And many a corpse lay side by side,
Disfigured all, or blood-besteep'd,
Or in one pile together heap'd.
In vain they sought the red plain through,
Amid the battle's baleful dew;
Still darker gloom'd the lowering skies,
And veil'd him from their searching eyes.

Sad, weak, despairing, and dismay'd
They wander'd to a woodland dell,
Where dwelt, beside a hermit's cell,
One who alone their search might aid,
For she had loved that sleeper well!

'Twas night, in night's most dreary hour;
A hush like death was in the dell,
And not a struggling moonbeam fell
Across the hermit's lonely cell
And long forsaken bower.

The walls with dews of years were damp;
The hermit's solitary lamp
Through latticed window shone no more;
The beams with moss were crusted o'er;
The rushes moulder'd on the floor.
Within the cell, half veil'd in dust,
The wicker cage, deserted, clung;
And from a nail all red with rust
The holy beads in order hung;
But cold was now the hand that strung!
Far from the light of living day
The saint's meek step had pass'd away;
And she whose foot alone might press
That threshold's dark desertness,
With stifled heart, nor sees nor heeds
The creeping moss, the gathering weeds.
Before a cross of crumbling stone
The Saxon woman knelt alone;
A being in her second youth—
A child of sin, but full of truth!

With hair unbound, and floating veil
Down-hanging from her drooping head;
With cheek and brow as marble pale,
And arms across her bosom spread;
Like to a form of sculptured woe,
So knelt she in her meekness low!
Like to a lily of that vale,
Once even as pure, and once as frail:
And though a fatal fond belief
In human truth had stain'd its leaf,
Now purified in holiest eyes,
By breath of penitential sighs,
And through the long remorseful years
Wash'd by the precious dew of tears.

No tedious tale their lips unfold,
A few brief words and all is told;
And she hath risen and pass'd them by,
With a strange gladness in her eye,
And with a look which seem'd to say
“Death waiteth for me by the way;
For one who sleeps my prayer is said,
And I go with him to the dead!”

A change had fallen o'er the field of repose,
As the night of the battle drew near to its close;
And many were there who never before
Had gazed on the clay where the soul dwelt no more:
Some in the crush of their agony bow'd,
Some weeping in silence, some mourning aloud;
The partner of years, and the bride of a day,
The serf from his labour, the child from its play,
The sire and the grandsire, the matron and mother,
The playmate of childhood, the sister and brother—
All mournfully bent o'er their cherished clay.

And where is she whose truth must burn
Brightest in sorrow's darken'd urn?
Like some lone pillar of the waste—
A column by the clouds embraced—
Apart in her stricken hour they found her
With the shades of death already around her.
They saw by her eye that her moments were number'd,
And a corpse at her feet in its royalty slumber'd.

It need not a seer to say
That there, before her face, he lay,
The earthly-born, by death perfected,
Thus found by love, thus love protected!
While tearless all, and soul-subdued,
And like a dove by her slaughter'd brood,
The love-lorn in her anguish stood:
With dull or inattentive ear,
That heeded not, or could not hear
The voice of wailing wild and loud;
Her eye upturn'd to the rolling cloud,

Time, place, and presence, all forgot;
Withlip that moved, but utter'd not,
And forward step that yet delay'd,
But knew not where nor why it stay'd.
Had one beheld them where they perish'd
Who both with equal love had cherish'd,
I know not which had most been wept,
The living corpse or him that slept!
As when a cloud its gloom disparts,
So night had sunk on both their hearts.

And suddenly, like night, she fell
Upon that life-deserted breast;
And made the heart she loved so well,
The pillow of her rest.
Like night she fell! but never more,
Like the young morn, on earth to rise—
A joyful world to wander o'er,
Or cast the dew-mist from her eyes:
Yet both shall know, though life be gone
A resurrection like the Dawn,
When, from the grave of buried night,
She cometh forth, a Soul of Light!

PROLOGUE, BY BARRY CORNWALL,

To “Recollections of Old Christmas,” a Masque, by T. Crofton Croker, F.S.A.; to be performed on Tuesday next (Christmas Eve), at Grimston Park, near Tadcaster, the seat of Lord Londesborough:—

When winter nights grow long,
And winds without blow cold,
We sit in a ring round the warm wood-fire,
And listen to stories old.
And we try to look grave (as maids should be)
When the men bring in boughs of the laurel-tree.
O the laurel! the evergreen tree!
The poets have laurels—and why not we?

How pleasant, when night falls down,
And hides the wintry sun,
To see them come in to the blazing fire,
And know that their work is done;
Whilst many bring in, with a laugh or rhyme,
Green branches of holly for Christmas time!

O the holly, the bright green holly!
It tells (like a tongue) that the times are jolly!
Sometimes—in our grave house
Observe this happeneth not;
But at times, the evergreen laurel boughs,
And the holly are all forgot!
And then! what then? why the men laugh low,
And hang up a branch of—the mistletoe!
Oh, brave is the laurel! and brave is the holly!
But the mistletoe banisheth melancholy!
Ah, nobody knows, nor ever shall know,
What is done under the mistletoe!

THE EMIGRANTS' HOME.

BY JOHN A. HERAUD.

Is Earth thy Home, where thou would'st stay
Where thou for ever would'st abide;
Though of that Country far away,
Bright rumours come with every tide?

Let calm reflection make thee bold,
The perils of the deep to brave;
Think of the Emigrants, untold
In number, who have cross'd the wave.

Friends stood upon the shore in grief,
And watch'd the bark dissolve and fade;
And whom it bore, in their belief,
Were lost to sight in endless shade.

What think ye in that bark, meanwhile,
Chanced with the adventurous spirits there?
Hope, joy, and triumph, jest and smile,
Laughter and mirth their voyage cheer.

They scorn the pauper left behind,
His scanty diet pining o'er;
And feel themselves for sway design'd,
Once landed on that other shore.

The fathers of auture race,
Progenitors of realms unborn,
Whose memories shall hold a place
Made radiant with the beams of morn.

Now that far country reach'd have they,
Have now subdued, now rule it o'er;
And every harvest bless the day
Whereon they left their native shore.

Prepare thee, Soul, to quit this spot,
Where life is sorrow, doubt, and pain:
There is a land where these are not,
A land where Peace and Plenty reign.

And, after all, is Earth thy Home?
Thy place of Exile, rather, where
Thou wert convey'd, ere thought could come,
To make thy young remembrance clear.

Oh! there in these are traces still,
Which of that other country tell—
That angel-land where came no ill,
Where thou art destined yet to dwell.

Yon azure depth thou yet shalt sail,
And, lark-like, sing at heaven's gate;
The bark that shall through air prevail,
Even now thy pleasure doth await.

The Ship of Souls will thrid the space
'Twixt earth and heaven with sudden flight:
Dread not the darkness to embrace,
That leads thee to the Land of Light!

CHRISTMAS EVE IN DEVONSHIRE.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION BY STOCKDALE.

CHRISTMAS is a season when the heart of man is evidently enlarged by sympathies of hospitality towards his fellow-creatures, in providing good cheer for himself and those whom Fortune has less favoured. Nowhere is this more substantially realised than amongst the farmers of Devon, who also preserve forms and ceremonies which the march of intellect has swept from other places. Ourselves wishing to see some of the sports in which our forefathers revelled, stepped over on Christmas Eve to Farmer B's. Passing the village, we were surprised at the silence prevailing; but an old woman cleared the mystery, by saying, “All the folk be up at the farm:” and, approaching this, the loud laugh and cheering light streaming through the chequered glass—making more dark the dull cold night without—told of a warm reception within. Entering the kitchen, amidst steam reeking from huge rounds of beef, joints of pork, heaps of turnips and potatoes, with puddings of monster rotundity, we discovered the burly host dealing out with unsparing hand to gladden the hearts of his lusty labourers. And truly, each seemed possessed of an appetite equal to the occasion—and, we trust, with powers of digestion such as we dyspeptics know of but by hearsay. Cider also flowed abundantly; and we felt that this meal to the man who receives but 6s. or 7s. a week as wages, must have proved a feast on which he could dwell with a satisfying delight. We could not but consider that the scene before us disproved the landlords' assertion so frequently made, and responded to by the gallant yeomen, “that the farmers are in a starving condition;” nor could we see that our host's provisions enjoyed protection, for all seemed to make free-trade with them.

“Bring in the fagot!”

“Behold him here!”

Fagots, like most other things, are by many in these parts termed of the masculine distinction.

“Clear the way!”

Now the ashen mass of 3 cwt. is raised on the dogs of the hearth, and in a few minutes the blaze from the scissing, crackling sticks,

heightened the ruddy hue of the rustic guests. Song succeeded song and when one presented more stupidity than another, shouts of laughter and bravos applauded to the skies. Now and then a fine voice broke upon the ear, leading us to regret that it was possessed by those whose souls had never been attuned to harmony. Many of their tunes were of the old English ballad class, and charmed us, not only as beings of the past, but having beauty in melody. Our hostess singing the song of "Barbara Allen," awakened the memory to emotions of the past; for we had listened to this song on a similar festivity, now thirty years ago. Then rapid, rolling flood—O Time! where hast thou borne those lips that sang, those ears that listened, those hearts that warmed with ours, leaving us alone to live again the associate scene?

Hark! what shout is that on which confusion seizes, all—men, women, and children, rushing pell-mell, scrambling to the highest bench—"The mummings are coming, hurrah! The mummings are coming, hurrah!" And then entered six or seven youths fantastically bedecked with ribbons, and gay, antiquated garments, ransacked from the bureaux of the grand-dames; here and there, a new bright silken bow, worn as a favour from their own dear Marys. Space being cleared, the play representing the unconquerable of Old England partially attracted the attention of the noisy audience. A warrior, lip corked à la moustache, personating the ambitious Napoleon, is brought to encounter St. George, who, after a fierce encounter, lays the vaunting Gallic dead upon the earth, the walls echoing the boisterous applause that greets his downfall. However, by the interposition of old Father Christmas, he is restored, to partake again of the season's blessings.

Near this point our Sketch is taken. At the right are seated those whose hunger craves relief, which the farmer's wife is labouring to accord. Facing are they who, with their senses quickened by the juice of apple, shout at the valiant heroes. Inclining against the chimney, behold the farmer watching to supply the wants of any of his friends. Beneath are placed a group of children, whose minds are wondering at so strange a sight. The old sheep-dog, from custom, appears a complacent observer; whilst the younger one barks at the quaint intruders. Above the door the fiddlers three add discord to the din; and from confusion worse confounded we gladly made a retreat. S.

BOW BELLS.

BY JOHN TIMBS.

WITH AN ILLUSTRATION.

Far as loud Bow's stupendous bells resound.—POPE.

A vast amount of antiquarian pleasantries and amusing research have been expended upon the history and practice of Bell-ringing. It was once a favourite pastime with grave and learned men, though there are few of us who care to recollect our forefathers as bell-ringers. Still, Sir Symonds D'Ewes, who was lord of the manor of Lavenham, in Suffolk, and one of the most accomplished antiquaries of his time, was fond of bell-ringing; as was Sir Matthew Hale, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; as was also the great Lord Burghley, Lord High Treasurer to Queen Elizabeth. Time, however, rings as many changes as bells themselves: our high functionaries no longer seek recreation from their official cares in bell-ringing; and Sir John Jervis and Lord John Russell are not very likely to ascend into the belfry of Bow, to shake off the unusual weight of the Common Pleas, or the weightier cares of Downing-street, by ringing a Christmas peal.

We must not be tempted to stray among the poets for their love of bells, else it may be as difficult to stop as the peal itself. Nor do we feel disposed to meddle with the *questio vexata*—when bells ought to be rung. Certainly, they are sometimes rung on very strange occasions, as when a gentleman, become very unpopular, has been most unjustly defeated in a lawsuit; and when the Beer Shop Bill was passed. We agree with a writer in the "Parish Choir," that there can be no harm in ringing the bells in honour of any important public event, or the arrival of any distinguished personage, or of any other event at which a Christian may lawfully rejoice; whilst to ring them for any party triumph, or for any malicious purpose, is abominable. "Let me," says this intelligent correspondent, "express my regret at that lamentable want of Christian feeling in the public and amongst parochial authorities, of which the prevalent abuses in the ringing of church bells afford an example. The weddings of the rich are graced by their mercenary sounds, whilst those of their poorer brethren are unheeded; and any political triumph or secular anniversary is greeted with merriment, whilst the leading events of the Christian year are passed over, unhonoured." From this kindly indignation must, however, be excepted CHRISTMAS, when, although much of the custom of profuse hospitality has passed away, this is yet universally recognised as a season when every Christian should show his gratitude to the Almighty, for the inestimable benefits procured to us by the Nativity of our Blessed Saviour, by an ample display of goodwill towards our fellow-men. And we do not know how this feeling can be better quickened than by a joyous peal of Bells, "the poor man's only music," "the mosaic of the air." Dr. Burney, the great authority on matters musical, has pointed out the innumerable rich and strange melodic passages that flit across one's ear in listening to a good peal of bells, which the writer in the "Parish Choir" cleverly compares to a musical kaleidoscope.

The writer just quoted, "John Clapper," remarks that any one who walks from the City of London westward at night (say on Christmas Eve) cannot fail to notice how vastly more soft and silvery are the tones of the City bells than of the more modern ones. The peal named at the head of this paper are a harmonious exemplification of this fact; and their history is of curious celebrity.

"The Church of St. Mary-le-Bow, or Bow Church," in the words of old Stow, "for divers accidents happening there, hath been made more famous than any other parish church of the whole City or suburbs." If not originally a Roman temple, as was once believed, it was one of the earliest churches built by our Norman conquerors. It has been destroyed by storm and by fire; was at one time garrisoned and besieged, and was afterwards the scene of an assassination. Our present business is, however, specially with Bow Bells, of which the citizens of London have ever been proud; and it was from their extreme fondness for them in old times, that a genuine Cockney has ever been supposed to be born within the sound of Bow Bells. According to Fynes Moryson, "the Londoners, and all within the sound of Bow Bells, are in reproach called Cockneys and eaters of buttered toasts." Beaumont and Fletcher speak of "Bow Bell suckers," i.e. as Mr. Dyce properly explains it, "children born within the sound of Bow Bells." Anthony Clod, a countryman, addressing *Gettings*, a citizen, in Shirley's "Contention for Honour and Riches," says, "Thou liest, and I am none of thy countryman: I was born out of the sound of yo'r pancake bell," i.e. the Apprentices' Shrove Tuesday Bell, when pancakes were in request, as they still are, and the London apprentices held a riotous holiday.—(Cunningham's "Handbook of London.")

"In the year 1649 (says Stow), it was ordained by a Common Council that the Bow Bells should be nightly rung at nine of the clock. Shortly after, John Donne, mercer, by his testament, dated 1472, gave to the parson and churchwardens two tenements in Hosier-lane (now Bow-lane) to the maintenance of Bow Bell, the same to be rung as aforesaid, and other things to be observed, as by the will appeareth. This Bell being usually rung somewhat late, as seemed to the young men, 'prentices, and others in Cheap, they made and set up a rhyme against the clerk as followeth:—

Clarke of the Bow bell, with the yellow lockes,
For thy late ringing thy head shall have knockes.

As well as the clerk's reply—

Children of Cheap, hold you all still,
For you shall have the Bow bell rung at your will.

William Copeland, churchwarden, either gave a new bell for this purpose, or caused the old one to be re-cast in 1515—Weever says the former."

This ringing of Bow Bell, observed to the present day, is a vestige of the Norman curfew. It is also observed at Charter House; St. George the Martyr, in Southwark; and in a few other parishes of the metropolis. At the same time that the order was given, in 1649, for the ringing of Bow Bells, lights were to be exhibited in the steeple during the night, to direct the traveller towards London.

The Bells, Steeple, and Church all shared the common fate in the Great Fire of 1666. The tower is shown in the View of London, 1543 (in the Sutherland Collection, in the Bodleian Library, Oxford); it is somewhat lofty, has a central

lantern or bell-turret, and a pinnacle at each corner. The church was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren; and on the steeple being finished, in 1679, part of £400 paid by the City to the united parishes for the site of Allhallows Church and churchyard, on which to build the present Honey-lane Market, was appropriated to a set of bells; Dame Dyonis Wilkinson having given £2000 towards erecting and beautifying the steeple. The belfry was prepared for twelve bells, but only eight were placed: these got sadly out of order, and after various repairs it was reported, in 1739, that the Great Bell was cracked; however, the peal was made good at the expense of £290.

In 1758, a petition was presented to the vestry from several respectable citizens, setting forth that on all public occasions the Bells of Bow are particularly employed, that the tenor bell is the completest in Europe, but the other seven are very much inferior, and by no means suitable to the said tenor. "Your petitioners, therefore, request that they may be allowed, at their own expense, to re-cast the seven smaller bells, and to add two trebles." This the parishes permitted, after an examination of the steeple by Dance and Chambers, the two ablest architects of the day, who reported that "such additional weight, nor any weight that can be put upon the steeple, will have any greater effect than the number of bells now placed there." Accordingly, the set of ten bells was completed by subscription, and was first rung June 4, 1762, the anniversary of the birth of King George III.

The weight of the Bells is as follows:—

		cwt.	q.	lb.			cwt.	q.	lb.
1st	..	8	1	7	6th	..	17	0	11
2nd	..	9	2	0	7th	..	20	2	26
3rd	..	10	1	4	8th	..	24	2	5
4th	..	12	0	7	9th	..	34	2	5
5th	..	12	0	24	10th	..	53	0	22

In 1820, the steeple was repaired, at a great expense, under the able direction of Mr. George Gwilt. The belfry was then surrounded with strong iron braces, both internally, and also in the masonry itself; the ashlar, or external face, being cut through to admit the same, and space being left to admit of the expansion of the metal: the weight of these braces is about six tons. At the above time it was said, or sung—

They've cut a yard off Bow Church steeple,

which was believed to be considerably lower than before the repairs: the fact, however, is, that, from some slight difference in the new work, the spire is four inches higher; the whole height from the bottom of the old Church being 239 ft. 6 in.

In the year 1822, some fear was expressed that the use of the bells would endanger the steeple; but, at a vestry, it was decided, by a large majority, to ring them for a trial; and as, from a subsequent examination of the steeple, there did not appear to be any cause for alarm, the amateurs of bell-ringing, and the Cockneys at large, have often since been gratified by the sound of Bow Bells.

The present set is much heavier, and more powerful in tone, than the first peal of Bells. It requires two men to ring the largest (the tenor, 53 cwt., key C), in consequence of its not being properly hung about two years since, on account of an accident having befallen it.

The ringers belong to a society called the "College Youths," founded in 1637, by Lord Bereton, Chief Justice Hale, Marquis of Salisbury, Lord Dacre, joined by several of the City Aldermen. The Society takes its name from the College of St. Spirit and Mary, founded by Sir Richard Whittington, on College-hill, Upper Thames-street, which was burnt down in the Great Fire. Its church had a peal of six bells; but the present church (St. Michael's), at the same place, has no bells. A book recording the names of the founders and members of "the College Youths," from 1637 to 1724, was lost about that time, and only recovered ten years since. It was found in the possession of a Bristol bookseller, who, having purchased it at a sale of a private library in Gloucestershire, advertised it in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, when it was repurchased by the members for six guineas. Each member subscribes 1d. a week for the expenses of keeping up the register, hand-bells, &c.; the certificate costs 6d.; admission fee, 2s. 6d. All the members (who are competent) can ring if they choose. There are about 200 members in the society, residing in different parts of the country, and fifty in London; they ring principally at St. Saviour's, Southwark (twelve bells); but they formerly rung at St. Martin's for sixty years. They generally ring the peal for pleasure; but, on Christmas Day, and other holidays, they are paid two guineas among the eleven. They ring once a month for practice and to gratify the neighbourhood. On Christmas Eve they ring at nine; New Year's Eve, from half-past eleven to half-past twelve. At St. Saviour's, on Christmas Eve, they ring at twelve. Another society, called the "Cumberland Society," rang for a few years at Bow Church. There is a peal called the "Whittington Peal," which can only be rung on twelve bells; and the College Youths are anxious to have two bells added to the present number, as the peal is considered incomplete.

The accompanying illustration shows the Bow Church Belfry, during a peal; and we agree with John Clapper, that "an awful thing it is to be in the bell-chamber, and witness the actual ringing of a set of Bells: what with the ponderous masses of metal swinging round and back again, the wheels in perpetual motion, the stunning sound, as the clappers fall, mixed with a constant hurdling humming sound, and the shaking of the tower itself, you might well be excused for feeling a little nervous."

THE OLD AND NEW YEAR.

BY JOHN HERAUD.

THE Bells will soon ring. Open the window, that we may hear the earliest sound of St. Paul's, or of the old bells of Bow. The hand of the dial-plate is on the stroke of Twelve, then will the merry peal begin. It will continue till the same hand is on the stroke of One, and then cease. The Old Year will have been thus tolled out, and the New Year tolled in.

Open the window. How suggestive is the Silence in the Air, like those quiet places in the best poems and dramas, which, with a few words, thrill and awe the thoughtful student! Such is the influence of Repose in all great works of art. Of all such works, Nature is the greatest; but then her Artist is Divine. This aerial Silence is the isthmus that connects two periods of Time—the Present is ever the bridge between the Past and the Future. The Dying Old Year a second will transfigure into the New-born, wherewith the universe now teems in expectation.

Time, however, is older at the moment of the New Year's nativity than it was at that of the Old Year's demise. Time is older than the year by nearly six thousand of such annual revolutions as that which has just accomplished its destiny. The Years are his Children, he being of all the common Parent—they for ever new, and he for ever old.

Well may the moment of transition be celebrated by Silence; distinguished from the vanished and the adventing, it stands for the present—ever an express image of the Eternal. And now, it has itself vanished, and, with its precursor, merged into the abyss of indistinction.

But there is Silence no more. As the Morning Stars sang together at Time's beginning, so now sing, or ring, both solemnly and merrily, the Bells at the New Year's. The initiate has been taken—the voice of a Principle is heard in their harmonious chime—their chorus is the manifold utterance of an Idea, the concert of many Thoughts. The Past has had its History, so will have the Future; and such history has been, and will be, the evolution of a Truth.

How significant have been the teachings of the year just passed away! Like the moment already referred to, it, also, was a period of transition—a path leading from Anarchy to Order. But what Order? There have been those who have "made a desolation, and called it Peace." Ere now, "Order" has "reigned at Warsaw." Non-resistance to oppressive tyranny has been enlorged as the most desirable state of social comfort. But this, we trust, is neither the kind nor condition of Order contemplated in the Future. No! we look forward with Hope, not with Dread. We have left behind us the Plain of Terrors, and journey with glad heart toward the Land of Promise.

Yes, the Old Year syllabled in its days and hours a Principle. It has had a Beginning, a Middle, and an End; and thus, categorically, has enounced the Idea, which was once a Mystery, and is now a Revelation. The weeks and months were a series of Thoughts—the moments, in their rapid succession, appeared as a cluster of Sensations. With the Old Year expired a Power that had exhausted all its forces.

The Year of Transition, with its suppressed treacheries and ambitions, with its one instinct of Peace and Order; with its fears, but not with its hopes, has descended to the shades, become a shade itself, and may henceforth haunt the world only as a ghost. Its Napoleonisms and its Changarnierisms have perished. No shadows even remain of them; themselves never having been substances, but figments—vague desires of mistaken self-interest, demoniac equivocations, chaotic illusions,

"Pinnacled dim in the intense Inane."

The world, like that part of it called France, now "desires Repose above all things." Yet "wars and rumours of war" are and become more and more, pre-

valent. Prophetic heralds of a new Power—foretellings by an expiring potentate touching his successor—the coming pre-uttered in the present and the passing—ye were, indeed, rife in the latter days of 1850, and your echoes are heard in this first hour of 1851. Phantom armies then traversed "the Fatherland" of Europe. Antagonistic principles drew themselves up in martial array; and the year closes, declaring the antagonism, but leaving the decision to its successors. Papal bulls, also, having the same meaning, reached England, fulminating Hibernianisms; and Guy Fawkes in our Protestant country made their "Pilgrim's Progress" through our streets in double state and of more than double size—the Bunyan effigies of Worldly Wiseman. To sum up all, Germany and Rome, as of old, are once more opposed. What then? And wherefore, O benevolent Diocesan! who startest at the spectre of an Archbishop of Westminster, and wouldst drive away the "horrible shadow" of Papal usurpation, risen from its burial-place with "twenty mortal murders on its crown"—wherefore, O respectable Prelate, dost thou charge thy clerisy with the unseasonable admonition that the criticism of the Teuton are more to be dreaded than the histrionisms of the Italian? O worthy Episcopus, fearest thou Philosophy more than thou hastest Superstition? Verily, I know that by such an absurd incubus many clerical minds, otherwise enlightened, have been hag-ridden. The true Churchman, meanwhile, sees but one object of dread—Superstition! For such negations as infidelity and atheism a more positive teaching is a facile and appropriate panacea. Be thus warned, O ye flames of the capital, by one of the Diaconate, lest ye be found wanting in the day of trouble.

"Something too much of this." And yet, whatever subordinate political or ecclesiastical signification events may have, the antagonism now suggested, let the word of a thoughtful man be taken for it, is the chief and fatal one. France, Russia, and Austria, so far as they are identified in interest, mean this element of it; and Prussia, Germany, and England, so far as they are identified in interest, mean that: Each has its Shibboleth; neither will pronounce the other's. Protestantism signifies Philosophy—Papalism, Superstition. These are the two watchwords, under these banners must the belligerents take the field, and to one of these must victory pertain. No well-beloved and charitable metropolitan will be permitted to trim an even balance between these two; but one, it is destined by "the Watchers," shall kick the beam.

Listen! Yes; such are the sayings of the Bells, as they ring from all our church steeples, faithful to the churches that support them.

Ring out, ye bells! a merry peal for the year 1851, with its Industrial Exhibition, the child of Philosophy and Science, and the grandchild of Art, progenitor of both. The world, under the sway of Superstition, has lived in fear of Love and Beauty. But Philosophy solicits both; and the great aim of the future, to make life ornamental, is at last intelligibly enounced. Wherefore a Crystal Palace rises; as if by magic, in the midst of an enchanted Circle, and in the National Pleasure-ground sets wide its gates for the reception of the Congress of Peoples. At this solemnity a Prince presides, the Consort of England's Queen; even she at whom Pío Nono from the Vatican launches his idle thunders; but who, from her Temple of glass, needing no defence, serenely appeals to Truth, whose invisible axis protects the sacred edifice with its rich contents, and the multitudes that defile through its long, extensive galleries, contemplating in its gathered treasures the accumulation of ages of invention, the history of social progress in many lands.

Life should be ornamental. The beggarly elements of asceticism are not at all in harmony with the truly pious soul. Activity and production are the laws of well-being. The most poetic minds are those that do most; the worthiest are the most poetic. The hero is a poet. To be the Husband of a Wife, and the Father of a Child, is to be one of the best of poets, and of heroes. Such was the first poet and the first man. The celibate is indolent and barren save of evil, loves no woman that is virtuous, owns no issue that is lawful, does no work that is profitable. His talent is concealed in a napkin, and his heart lies stillborn in his bosom, alike its cradle and its coffin.

Some vital dynamic sages have stated that the animals are abortive men. Such an imperfect example of the perfect human is that man, be he priest or not, to whom, by his religious creed, Love and Beauty are prohibited. Without both these, what were the Soul, with her sentiment of Immortality, with her sense of Immutability and her self-satisfaction with her own unchanging Form? Both, ay, both she recognizes in her own sublime subsistence, and also creates for her perception in the world of fancy and of fact. Deprived of desire, and banished from its object, she lives no more in existence, but simply lends vitality to death, and slumbers a carrion corpse in the mausoleum of the universe. Embalmed or not, sacred or profane, the corpse is but a corpse, and the mausoleum not a temple for the living, but a tomb for the dead.

And the Old Year is dead; and this bright cope of Heaven, "fretted with golden fires," has lighted forth the obsequies of the departing Phantom, as shade by shade it melted into distance. And, behold! a little Child, having "on his baby brow the top and round of sovereignty," ascends as it were from the Sea of Space, and in the Orient precedes the Sun, like an infant Aurora, impatient to dispel the darkness. It is the New-born Year, attended by Beauty and Love. Ere long the Night that has so long veiled the nations shall dissolve before the breath of the Morning and the glory of the Day. Call the Cherub that now appears by the name of Hope; baptize it with the dews of the dawn, and enrobe it with the radiance of the day-spring, which from on high anon revisits the awakened earth, preluding the year of promise.

And, lo! the Bells have ceased pealing, as the steeple-clocks boom out the hour of One. They have celebrated both Death and Birth—the departure of the Old, and the arrival of the New. And now again there is Silence in the Air; and, through it, the Stars and Planets shed benignant influence and consolation. So still, yet move they in harmonious dance; so hushed, yet "ever singing as they shine." That music to man, "grossly hemmed in" by the "muddy vesture of decay," is now inaudible; those "unexpressed notes" even the emperish spirit of a Plato may only apprehend; or if, as sometimes we wildly believe, they have power to touch our senses—then, in the language of Milton, "Ring out, ye crystal spheres!"

Nay, let us instruct our joy to be proud, and credit that in this auspicious hour a choir of Celestials might descend to welcome the New-born. Methinks, they do already. Such Hope reanimates the enthusiastic bosom, that, with its warmth, the Past and the Future are interfused. Not only hath Time run back, and "fetched the age of gold," but we have dreamed of the Millennium, when—

"Truth and Justice
Will down return to men,
Orbed in the rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Throned in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And Heaven, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall."

"But wisest Fate says, No." Teeming with Promise, the New Year lies yet but "in smiling infancy," though, it is confessed, with more of "Heaven about it" than the majority of its predecessors. Let us remember that the Law of Progress supposes contest and suffering, because of old antagonisms in new shapes, of defunct superstitions galvanically revived, and of authority perverted, both in Church and State. There will still be "philosophies falsely so called," and "religions falsely so called;" and the latter will still oppose the true philosophy, as the former will the true religion. But, in both cases, the issue concerns the honour of Truth; and Truth, in vindication of her sacred character, will put forth her greatness and prevail.

Of the "full and perfect bliss" that we all expect, my present faith maintains that the present Hour is the hallowed beginning. But the bright-eyed oracles above, if not dumb, are yet beyond our mortal hearing; and Astrology has long ceased to deceive the scientific. Truly, this Stillness itself is ominous of Error's fall. Better, it seems to say, absolute Silence than a lying Utterance; for, how is it that Falsehood, both in word and act, has become enthroned among the Principalities and Powers? Is it not that Conjecture has substituted Knowledge, and Language preceded Experience? Thanks to Philosophy, the days of Credulity are numbered; and popular Delusions, belying their name, hold now rather of the few than of the many. The sullen Moloch of the Past has become fugitive, and

"Left in shadows dread,
His burning idol all of blackest hue
In vain with cymbals' ring,
They call the grisly King,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue."

Ay, in vain. The "War of Principles," foretold by a British statesman, has commenced; but even at this first hour of the New Year, the prophet-soul may appropriate the victory and adjudge the laurel. The two triple powers now antagonised are unequally matched. Divided France believes not in the Pontiff whom she has restored; Austria nurtures revolution in her bosom; and Russia, besides being schismatic, is no longer secure from the influence of European opinion: whereas England, having survived Chartism, and pledged to self-regeneration, were equal to the emergency, even though Germany with its learning, and Prussia with its education, should prove deficient in the hour of trial. To me this New Year with its triumphs of industries, with its appeals to peace, with

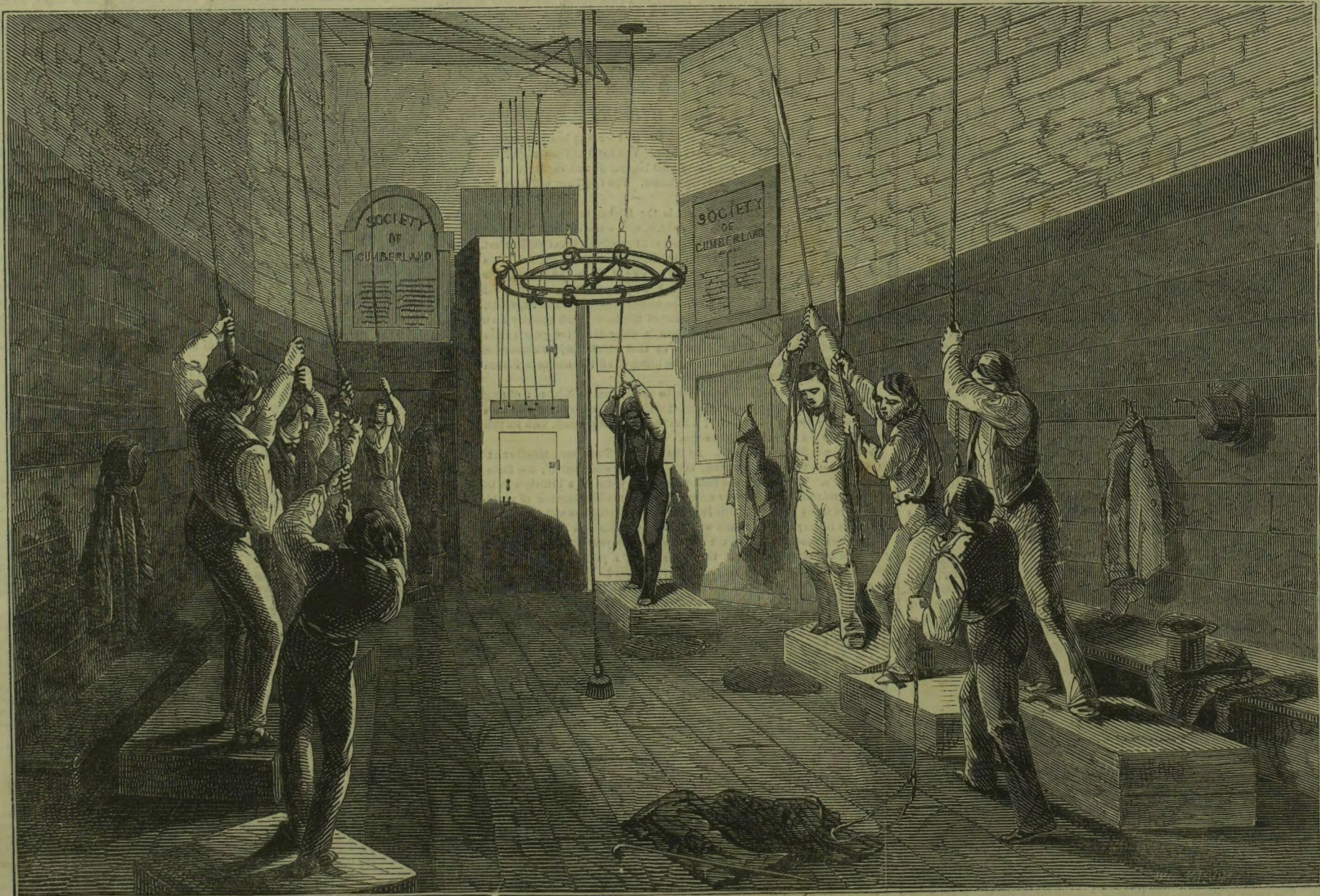


CHRISTMAS EVE IN DEVONSHIRE.—THE MUMMERS COMING IN.—(SEE PAGE 498.)

its scorn of Papal Aggression, with its cosmopolitism of sentiment, and its youthful vigour, shows, in the first hour of its existence, like an infant Alcides strangling the huge Typhon, even in his cradle.

And now the Dawn appears. We have outwatched the stars, and even
 "The yellow-skirted fayes
 Fly after the night steeds, leaving their moon-loved maze."

Wherefore hail we the rising sun, saying "Hail! hail!" bare-headed, humble-hearted; while to his Maker we breathe the prayer of hope, that the "New Year" may be "happy!"



THE BOW-BELL PEAL ON CHRISTMAS EVE.—(SEE PRECEDING PAGE.)